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GEORGE ALLEN AND UNWIN, LIMITED

# *The Simplification of Life*

*From the Writings of*  
**EDWARD CARPENTER**

*Selected by* **HARRY ROBERTS**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

**I** DESIRE to express my indebtedness to Mr. Carpenter and to Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., for their courteous permission to reprint, from books, of which they own the copyright, the selections which compose the present volume.

I have chosen the title of this volume, "The Simplification of Life," because it seemed best to express the keynote of nearly all Mr. Carpenter's writings—the clearing away of the husks and conventions that have accumulated round life in the course of the centuries, and the basing of our actions on the real facts of existence.



# The Simplification of Life

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## POEMS

*From "Forerunner Democracy"*

---

### WHAT IS FREEDOM ? •

I heard a voice say What is Freedom ?

I have heard (it said) the lions roaring in their dens ; I have seen the polyp stretching its arms upwards from the floor of the deep ;

I have heard the cries of slaves and the rattling of their chains, and the hoarse shout of victims rising against their oppressors ; I have seen the deliverers dying calmly on the scaffold.

I have heard of the centuries-long struggle of nations for constitutional liberty—the step-by-step slowly-won approaches as to some inner and impregnable fastness ;

I know the wars that have been waged, the flags flying to and fro over the earth ? I know that

one tyranny has been substituted for another, and that the forms of oppression have changed :

But what is Freedom ?

Villeins and thralls become piece-men and day-tal men, and the bondsmen of the land become the bondsmen of Machinery and Capital ; the escaped convicts of Labour sit admiringly the bracelets of Wealth round their own wrists.

I have seen the slaves of Opinion and Fashion, of Ignorance and of Learning, of Drink and Lust, of Chastity and Unchastity :

One skin cast leaves another behind, and that another, and that yet another ;

I have seen over the world the daily fear of Death and Hell, of Pain and momentary overhanging Chance ;

I have seen recluses craning their lives up into impossible heavens, thinkers hopelessly meditating after philosophic Truth, memorables lying covered with bed-sores, household drudges running from the hearth to the slopstone and from the slopstone to the hearth all their lives ;

Something of all these slaveries I know—they are very well in their way—

But what is Freedom ?

And I heard (in the height) another voice say :  
I AM.

In the recluse, the thinker, the incurable and the drudge, I AM. I am the giver of Life, I am Happiness.

I am in the good and evil, in the fortunate and the unfortunate, in the gifted and the incapable, alike ; I am not one more than the other.

The lion roaring in its den, and the polyp on the floor of the deep, the great deep itself, know **ME**.

The long advances of history, the lives of men and women—the men that scratched the reindeer and mammoth on bits of bone, the Bushmen painting their rude rock-paintings, the mud-hovels clustering round mediæval castles, the wise and kindly Arab with his loving boy-attendants, the Swiss mountain-herdsman, the Russian patriot, the English mechanic.

Know **ME**. I am Happiness in them, in all—underlying. I am the Master, showing myself from time to time as occasion serves.

I am not nearer to one than the other; they do not seek me so much as I advance through them.

Out of all would **YOU** emerge?

Would you at last, O child of mine, after many toils and endless warfare (for without such all is in vain) emerge and become **MY EQUAL**?

[Wonderful, wonderful is this that I tell you! Would you too become a Master—when you have seen and known all slaveries, and have ceased to put one before the other—]

Would you, whom I have often silently been with, to whom in the early morning I have come kissing you on the lips to leave Happiness for your waking, whom I have taught long and long my own ways, even for this—become my Equal? would you look me at last in the face?

It shall be then. The way is long but the centuries are long. Faint not. Does my voice sound distant? Faint not.

Even now for a moment round your neck, advancing, I stretch my arms; to my lips I draw you,

I press upon your lips the seal of a covenant that cannot be forgotten.

I — who write — translate for you these thoughts : I wipe a mirror and place it in your hands [look long, O friend, look long, satiate yourself]—

I bring you to your own, to take, or leave for a while, as pleases you best. I have perfect faith in you.

And can wait : the whole of Time is before me.

The little red stars appear once more shining among the hazel catkins ; the pewit tumbles and cries as at the first day, the year begins again.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west, the old circle of days and nights completes itself ;

But henceforth the least thing shall speak to you words of deliverance, the commonest shall please you best ;

And the fall of a leaf through the air and the greeting of one that passes on the road shall be more to you than the wisdom of all the books ever written — and of this book.

## ARE YOU LAUGHED AT?

Are you laughed at, are you scorned? Do they gaze at you and giggle to each other as you pass by? Do they despise you because you are mis-shapen, because you are awkward, because you are peculiar, because you fail in everything you do - and you know it is true?

Do you go to your chamber and hide yourself and think that no one thinks of you, or when they do only with contempt?—

My child, there is One that not only thinks of you, but who cannot get on at all without you.

Are you alone in the world?

Have you sinned? have you a terrible secret within you which must out, yet you dare not reveal it?

Have you a face so disfigured that no one will look straight in your eyes?

Have you a mortal disease? do you feel the beating pulse of it in the dead of the night? At mid-day when the passers-by go to and fro in the bright sunshine, do you feel the shadowy call of it to another world?



## **6 THE SIMPLIFICATION OF LIFE .**

**Are you tormented with inordinate clutching lusts which you dare not speak ? are you nearly mad with the sting of them, and nearly mad with terror lest they should betray you ?**

**My child, there is One who understands perfectly. There is nothing betrayed, and there is nothing to betray.**

**It is all straightforward.**

**There is no fraction of your days, your body, your thoughts, your passions, which has not deliberately and calmly been prepared—and which shall not deliberately and calmly be removed again when it has played its part.**

**There is no prejudice here, or weakness or self-righteousness, nor any apartness at all :**

**You are included, and all that is done and felt by you is done and felt at the same instant by not you ;**

**Whatever you are, and whatever you do, there is One who will and does look you candidly in the face and understands you.**

**You may recoil from that gaze ; but if you learn to encounter and return it (whether in one or many lifetimes) you will see that from it at length all secret terrors, shams, disfigurements, death itself, vanish away ;**

**And you will not only not be alone in the world, but you will be a sovereign lord over the world.**

## DID YOU ONCE DESIRE TO SHINE AMONG YOUR PEERS ?

Did you once desire to shine among your peers  
or did you shrink from the knowledge of your own  
defect in the midst of them ?

Did you, friend, covet so to be more beautiful,  
witty, virtuous - to be able to tell a story or sustain  
an argument well, or to be able to discourse on any  
subject, or to be a skilful rider or a good shot --

Or shrink from the ridicule which the reverse  
of these excited -- which was certain and is still certain  
to come upon you ?

Was it really your own anxious face you used  
to keep catching in the glass ? was it really you who  
had so many things, one way or another, you wanted  
to conceal from others -- so many opinions too to  
disguise ?

All that is changed now.

But what if your prayers had been granted ?  
What if you had become exceptional and had secured  
for yourself a place with the strong and the gifted and  
the beautiful ?

What if when you arrived the eyes of all had  
been turned upon you ; and when you had passed by

—one by one, sad, thoughtful, depressed, the weak more conscious of his or her weakness, the stupid more conscious of stupidity, the deformed more painfully conscious of his or her deformity, to their solitary chambers they had gone apart and prayed they had never been born ?

What if you had taken advantage of the weak and defenceless and oppressed of the whole Earth—and had bartered away belief in the Soul standing omnipotent in the most despised things ?

What if you had gladly disguised and covered your own defect, allowing thus the ignorant ridicule of the world to fall more heavily on those who could not or would not act a lie ?

What if you had been a rank deserter, a cowardly slave, taking refuge always with the stronger side ?

Ah ! what if to one weary traveller in the world, in the steep path painfully mounting, you making it steeper still had added the final stone of stumbling and despair ?

Better to be effaced, crazy, criminal, deformed, degraded.

Better instead of the steep to be the most dull flat and commonplace road.

Better to go clean underfoot of all weak and despised persons—so that they shall not even notice that you are there ;

None so rude and uneducated but you shall go underfoot of them, none so criminal but you shall when the occasion serves go underfoot of them, none so outcast but they shall pass along you and not even notice that you are there.

## EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE

She lies, whom Money has killed, and the greed  
of Money,

The thrice-driven slave, whom a man has  
calmly tortured,

And cast away in the dust—and calls it not  
murder,

Because he only looked on ; while his trusted  
lieutenants

Supply and Demand pinned the victim down  
—and her own mother Nature slew her !

The old story of the sewing machine—the  
treadle machine ;

Ten hours a day and five shillings a week, a  
penny an hour or so—if the numbers were of import-  
ance.

Of course she fell ill. Indeed she had long  
been ailing, and the effort and the torture were slowly  
disorganising her frame ; and already the grim ques-  
tion had been asked : " Might she have rest ? "—  
(the doctor said *must*—and for many a month, too).

And the answer came promptly as usual.  
" Have rest ?—as much as she wanted ! It was a

pity, but of course if she could not work she could go. They would make no difficulty, as Supply would fill up her place as soon as vacant."

One more struggle then. And now she *must* go, for work is impossible, and Supply *has* filled her place, and there is no difficulty—or difference—except to her.

For her only the hospital pallet, and the low moaning of the distant world ;

For her only the fever and the wasting pain and the nightmare of the loud unceasing treadles ;

And the strange contrast in quiet moments of the still chamber and the one kindly face of the house-surgeon, stethoscope in hand, at her bedside ;

For her only, hour after hour, the dull throbbing recollection of the injustice of the world,

The bleak unlovely light of averted eyes thrown backwards and forwards over her whole life,

And the unstaunched wound of the soul which is their bitter denial.

And at last the lessening of the pain, and a sense of quietude and space, and through the murky tormented air of the great city a light, a ray of still hope on her eyes peacefully falling ;

And then in a moment the passing of the light, and a silence in the long high-windowed ward ;

And one with an aster or two and a few chrysanthemums, and one with a blown white rain-bewept rose half-timidly coming,

To lay on her couch, with tears.

And so a grave.

In the dank smoke-blackened cemetery, in the dismal rain of the half-awakened winter day,

A grave, for her and her only.

## EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE 11

And yet not for her only—but for thousands—  
For hundreds of thousands—to lie undone, forsaken—

Tossed impatiently back from the whirling  
iron—

The broken wheels, or may be merely defective—

Who cares ?—

That as they spin roll off and are lost in the  
darkness,

Run swiftly away (as if they were alive !) into  
the darkness, and are hidden,

Who cares ? who cares ?

Since for each one that is gone Supply will  
provide a thousand.

Who cares ? who cares ?

O tear-laden heart !

O blown white rose heavy with rain !

O sacred heart of the people !

Rose, of innumerable petals, through the long  
night ever blossoming !

Surely by thy fragrance wafted through the  
still night-air,

Surely by thy spirit exhaled over the sleeping  
world, I know,

Out of the bruised heart of thee exhaled, I  
know—

And the vision lifts itself before my eyes —

*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in  
vain who build it,*

In vain millions of yards of calico and miles of  
lace-work turned out per annum ;

In vain a people well clad in machine-made cloth and hosiery ;

In vain a flourishing foreign trade and loose cash enough for a small war ;

In vain universal congratulations and lectures on Political Economy ;

In vain the steady whirr of wheels all over the land, and men and women serving stunted and pale before them, as natural as possible ;

*Except Love build the house, they labour in vain who build it.*

O rich and powerful of the earth

Behold, your riches are all in vain—you are poorer than the poorest of these children !

Against one such whom you have wronged your armies your police and all the laws that you can frame shall not prevail.

Your palaces of splendour are reared from the beginning upon a foundation of lies, and the graves that you have dug for others shall be for your own burial.

The word is gone forth !

The wealth the power that you have coveted crumble from your grasp as in a dream.

You have thought to drive armies of starving slaves to win idleness and luxury for you,

But it shall be as a dream : they shall surely elude you.

Behold, your armies shall vanish away—even while the word is on your lips, while your hand of command is lifted,

Your armies shall vanish away like smoke, they shall surely surely elude you.

## EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE

In Death shall they vanish away,  
(O fragrance wafted through the still night-  
air !)

In Death shall they breathe through your bonds  
and become as the impalpable winds.

Like deserters at night stealing away in thou-  
sands out of a camp,

They shall pass a ghostly army to the other  
side :

Broken and worn and sick—a ghostly army  
shall they pass and vanish ;

And ye shall dream that they are gone.

But they are not gone.

For with the morning—out of the ground—

Out of their mother Earth—star-thick -- and  
ye cannot bind them more than ye can bind the stars—

Out of the heart of their mother, and out of  
the hearts of the asters and star-shaped chrysanthemums,

Arising—

Through the hollow air and down the rustling  
flowing rivers,

Over the meadows with the feet of the wind  
whitening the grass,

From the mystic chambers of their innumer-  
able homes—out of the mystic doors—

Out of the doors of Death and Birth - in  
thousands—out of the doors of preparation,

Full-equipped hastening, from all sides swiftly  
gathering,

A radiant army into your great towns pouring.

Down your long streets striding, they shall  
return



## 14 THE SIMPLIFICATION OF LIFE

Spirits of awful knowledge,  
(Clad anew with fleshly hands and feet, through  
sunlit eyes still glancing,)

And of deep-gathered silent agelong experience ;  
Spirits of the suffering brotherhood—spirits of  
awful authority—

Before whom materials shrivel and the ac-  
cumulations of Custom are blown on the wind like  
chaff—

A self-appointed army they shall return :

Out of whom the word of transformation—

Whispered on many a half-awakened winter  
day to the silent earth alone—

Shall be spoken aloud as with a trumpet over  
the world—and the world shall be changed.

## HAVE FAITH

**Do not hurry : have faith.**

Remember that if you become famous you can never share the lot of those who pass by unnoticed from the cradle to the grave, nor take part in the last heroism of their daily life ;

If you seek and encompass wealth and ease the divine outlook of poverty cannot be yours—nor shall you feel all your days the loving and constraining touch of Nature and Necessity ;

If you are successful in all you do, you cannot also battle magnificently against odds ;

If you have fortune and good health and a loving wife and children, you cannot also be of those who are happy without these things.

Covet not overmuch. Let the strong desires come and go ; refuse them not, disown them not ; but think not that in them lurks finally the thing you want.

Presently they will fade away and into the intolerable light will dissolve like gossamers before the sun.

## HAVE FAITH

I saw deep in the eyes of the animals the human soul look out upon me.

I saw where it was born deep down under feathers and fur, or condemned for awhile to roam four-footed among the brambles. I caught the clinging mute glance of the prisoner, and swore that I would be faithful.

Thee my brother and sister I see and mistake not. Do not be afraid. Dwelling thus and thus for a while, fulfilling thy appointed time—thou too shalt come to thyself at last.

Thy half-warm horns and long tongue lapping round my wrist do not conceal thy humanity any more than the learned talk of the pedant conceals his—for all thou art dumb we have words and plenty between us.

Come nigh little bird with your half-stretched quivering wings—within you I behold choirs of angels, and the Lord himself in vista.

Crooning and content the old hen sits—her thirteen chicks cheep cheerily round her, or nestle peeping out like little buds from under her wings ;

Keen and motherly is her eye, placid and joyful her heart, as the sun shines warm upon them.

Do not hurry : have faith.

[Whither indeed should we hurry ? is it not well here ?

- A little shelter from the storm, a stack of fuel for winter use, a few handfuls of grain and fruit—

And lo ! the glory of all the earth is ours.]

The main thing is that the messenger is perhaps even now at your door—and to see that you are ready for his arrival :

A little child, a breath of air, an old man hobbling on crutches, a bee lighting on the page of your book—who knows whom He may send ?

Some one diseased or dying, some friendless, outcast, criminal—

One whom it shall ruin your reputation to be seen with—yet see that you are ready for his arrival.

Likely whoever it is his coming will upset all your carefully laid plans :

Your most benevolent designs will likely have to be laid aside—and he will set you to some quite common-place business—or perhaps of dubious character—

Or send you a long and solitary journey—perhaps he will bring you letters of trust to deliver—perhaps the prince himself will appear—

Yet see that you are ready for his arrival.

Is your present experience hard to bear ?

Yet remember that never again perhaps in all your days will you have another chance of the same.

Do not fly the lesson, but have a care that you master it while you have the opportunity.

## HAVE FAITH

Resume the ancient dignity of your race, lost, almost forgotten as it is.

What is it surely that you are fretting about ? Is it the fashions, or what men say about you, or the means of livelihood, or is it the sense of duty this way and that, or trivial desires, that will not let you rest ?

Are you so light, like a leaf, that such things as these will move you—are you so weak that one such slender chain will deprive you of inestimable Freedom ?

And yet the lilies of the field and the beasts that have no banks of deposit or securities are not anxious : they have more dignity than you.

As long as you harbour motives so long are you giving hostages to the enemy—while you are a slave (to this and that) you can only obey. It is not You who are acting at all.

Brush it all aside.

Pass disembodied out of yourself. Leave the husk, leave the long long prepared and perfected envelope.

Enter into the life which is eternal, pass through the gate of indifference into the palace of mastery, through the door of love out into the great open of deliverance ;

Give away all that you have, become poor and without possessions—and behold ! you shall be lord and sovereign of all things.

## I HEARD A VOICE

I heard a voice say unto me :—

Now since thou art neither beautiful nor witty,  
it is in vain that thou hangeest about the doors of the  
admired palaces :

For thou wilt not gain admission—thou !

But here outside is a plot of waste ground  
where canst build thee a little cabin—all thine own ;  
And since it is close by the common road and  
there is no fence about it,

Many a weary traveller parched with the heat  
of the day shall turn in unto thee for a cup of cold  
water :

And that shalt suffice for Thy life.

## BY THE SHORE

All night by the shore.

The obscure water, the long white lines of advancing foam—the rustle and thud, the panting sea-breaths, the pungent sea-smell—

The great slow air moving from the distant horizon, the immense mystery of space, and the soft canopy of the clouds !

The swooning thuds go on—the drowse of ocean goes on—

The long inbreaths—the short sharp outbreaths—the silence between.

I am a bit of the shore : the waves feed upon me, they come pasturing over me ;

I am glad, O waves, that you come pasturing over me.

I am a little arm of the sea : the same tumbling swooning dream goes on—I feel the waves all around me, I spread myself through them.

How delicious ! I spread and spread. The waves tumble through and over me—they dash through my face and hair.

The night is dark overhead : I do not see them, but I touch them and hear their gurgling laughter.

The play goes on !

The strange expanding indraughts go on !

Suddenly I am the Ocean itself : the great soft  
wind creeps over my face.

I am in love with the wind—I reach my lips  
to its kisses.

• How delicious ! all night and ages and ages  
long to spread myself to the gliding wind !

But now (and ever) it maddens me with its  
touch. I arise and whirl in my bed, and sweep my  
arms madly along the shores.

I am not sure any more which my own par-  
ticular bit of shore is ;

All the bays and inlets know me : I glide along  
in and out under the sun by the beautiful coast-line ;

My hair floats leagues behind me ; millions  
together my children dash against my face ; •

I hear what they say and am marvellously  
content.



## AFTER LONG AGES

This is the order of man and all history ;

Descending he runs to and fro over the world,  
and dwells (for a time) among things that have no  
sense ;

Forgetful of his true self he becomes a self-  
seeker among shadows.

But out of these spring only war and conflict  
and tangling of roots and branches ;

And things which have no sense succeed things  
which have no sense—for nothing can have any sense  
but by reason of that of which it is the shadow—and  
one phantasmal order follows another — and one  
pleasure or indulgence another — and one duty or  
denial another—

Till, bewildered and disgusted, finding no rest,  
no peace, but everywhere only disappointment,

He returns (and History returns) seeking for  
that which is.

Toilsome and long is the journey ; shell after  
shell, envelope after envelope, he discards.

Over the mountains, over the frowning barriers,  
undaunted, unwrapping all that detains him,

Enduring poverty, brother of the outcast and  
of animals, enduring ridicule and scorn,

**Through vast morasses, by starlight and dawn,  
through dangers and labours and nakedness, through  
chastity and giving away all that he has, through long  
night watches on the mountains and washings in the  
sunlit streams and sweet food untainted by blood,  
through praises and thanks and joy ascending before**

**All conventions left aside, all limitations passed,  
all shackles dropped—the husks and sheaths of ages  
falling off—**

**At length the Wanderer returns to heaven.**

## AFTER LONG AGES

What else (than this) are the dreams of all people and of eras and ages upon the earth ?

What else are the glowing dreams of boyhood, and the toys of age, and the promises floating ever on before—dim mirages to wayworn travellers ? (faint not, O faint not !)

What else the sound of Christmas hymns across the snow—the tender and plaintive songs of centuries—dreams of the Better Land—coming down from before all history.

What the obstinate traditions of races and explorations by sea and land—the instinct of the chase—searches for the Earthly paradise, Utopias of social reformers, Eldorados and fabled Islands, stirrings of adventure and conquest—pilgrimages, myths, and the tireless quest of the Sangreal ?

The unquenchable belief in the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone—the feverish ardour of modern science, like a dog with its nose on the trail ?

What else the marvellous dreams of the little creatures walking the earth—the dreams of religion

—the skies peopled, and the vast cosmogonies of the gods, the huge and impending Otherworld—the mystic scroll of the Zodiac—

The dim-lit chambers of rock-temples and pyramids and cathedrals—the ark, the host, and the holy of holies—

- The proclamations and gospels of all lands, the giving of fire from the mosque at Jerusalem, the lighting of innumerable candles—the far-away songs of the priests by the Nile-strand, standing by the empty sarcophagus with the words: "Osiris is risen"—the midnight naked dances of the Therapeutæ upon the sands, the processions of salvation armies and revivalists—

The daily life of each man and woman, the ever expected Morrow, the endless self-seeking, the illusive quests (faint not, O faint not!), the bog-floundering after fatuous wisps; the tears, disappointments, and obstinate renewals of hope—

All routes and roads and the myriad moving of feet to and fro over the earth—

What are they but Transparencies of one great fact—symbols of the innumerable paths

By which the soul returns to Paradise ?

## AFTER LONG AGES

I beheld a vision of Earth with innumerable paths ;

I saw the faces that go up and down—the world that each carries within.

I heard the long roar and surge of History, wave after wave—as of the never-ending surf along the immense coastline of West Africa.

I heard the world-old cry of the down-trodden and outcast : I saw them advancing always to victory.

I saw the red light from the guns of established order and precedent—the lines of defence and the bodies of the besiegers rolling in dust and blood—yet more and ever more behind !

And high over the inmost citadel I saw magnificent, and beckoning ever to the besiegers, and the defenders ever inspiring, the cause of all that never-ending war—

The form of Freedom stand.

## AFTER CIVILISATION

In the first soft winds of spring, while snow yet  
lay on the ground—

Forth from the city into the great woods  
wandering,

Into the great silent white woods where they  
waited in their beauty and majesty .

For man their companion to come :

There, in vision, out of the wreck of cities and  
civilisations,

I saw a new life arise.

Slowly out of the ruins of the past—like a  
young fern-frond uncurling out of its own brown  
litter—

Out of the litter of a decaying society, out of  
the confused mass of broken down creeds, customs,  
ideals,

Out of distrust and unbelief and dishonesty,  
and Fear, meanest of all (the stronger in the panic  
trampling the weaker underfoot) ;

Out of miserable rows of brick tenements with  
their cheapjack interiors, their glances of suspicion,  
and doors locked against each other ; .

Out of the polite residences of congested idleness ; out of the aimless life of wealth ;

Out of the dirty workshops of evil work, evilly done ;

Out of the wares which are no wares poured out upon the markets, and in the shop-windows,

The fraudulent food, clothing, drink, literature ;

Out of the cant of Commerce—buying cheap and selling dear—the crocodile sympathy of nation with nation—

The smug merchant posing as a benefactor of his kind, the parasite parsons and scientists ;

The cant of Sex, the impure hush clouding the deepest instincts of boy and girl, woman and man ;

The despair and unbelief possessing all society—rich and poor, educated and ignorant, the money-lender, the wage-slave, the artist and the washer-woman alike ;

All feeling the terrible pressure and tension of the modern problem ;

Out of the litter and muck of a decaying world,

Lo ! even so

I saw a new life arise.

The winter woods stretched all around so still !

Every bough laden with snow—the faint purple waters rushing on in the hollows, with steam on the soft still air !

Far aloft the arrowy larch reached into the sky, the high air trembled with the music of the loosened brooks.

O sound of waters, jubilant, pouring pouring—O hidden sound in the hollows !

Secret of the earth, swelling sobbing to divulge itself !

Slowly, building lifting itself up atom by atom,  
 Gathering itself together round a new centre—  
 or rather round the world-old centre once more re-  
 vealed—

I saw a new life, a new society, arise.

Man I saw arising once more to dwell with

• Nature ;

[The old old story—the prodigal son returning,  
 so loved.

The long estrangement, the long entanglement  
 in vain things]—

The child returning to its home—companion of  
 the winter woods once more—

Companion of the stars and waters—hearing  
 their words at first hand (more than all science ever  
 taught)—

The near contact, the dear dear mother so  
 close—the twilight sky and the young tree-tops  
 against it ;

The huts on the mountain-side companionable  
 of the sun and the winds, the lake unsullied below ;

The daily bath in natural running waters, or  
 in the parallel foam-lines of the sea, the pressure of  
 the naked foot to the earth :

The few needs, the exhilarated radiant life—  
 the food and population question giving no more  
 trouble ;

[No hurry more, no striving one to override the  
 other :

Each one doing the work before him to do, and  
 taking his chance of the reward,

Doubting no more of his reward than the hand  
 doubts, or the foot, to which the blood flows according  
 to the use to which it is put :]

The plentiful common halls stored with the



products of Art and History and Science to supplement the simple household accommodations ;

The sweet and necessary labour of the day ;

All these I saw—for man the companion of Nature.

Civilisation behind him now—the wonderful stretch of the past ;

Continents, empires, religions, wars, migrations—all gathered up in him ;

The immense knowledge, the vast winged powers—to use or not to use—

He comparatively indifferent, passing on to other spheres of interest.

The calm which falls after long strife, the dignity of rest after toil ;

Hercules, his twelve labours done, sitting as a god on the great slope of Olympus—

Looking out over the Earth, on which he was once a mortal.

## LOVE'S VISION

At night in each other's arms,  
Content, overjoyed, resting deep deep down in  
the darkness,

Lo ! the heavens opened and He appeared—  
Whom no mortal eye may see,  
Whom no eye clouded with Care—  
Whom none who seeks after this or that—  
whom none who has not escaped from self.

There—in the region of Equality, in the world  
of Freedom no longer limited,  
Standing as a lofty peak in heaven above the  
clouds,

From below hidden, yet to all who pass into  
that region most clearly visible—  
He the Eternal appeared.

## SIMPLIFICATION OF LIFE

(From "*England's Ideal*")

It is all congestion. Congestion at the dance—so many people, such dresses, that dancing is impossible. Congestion at the dinner party—congestion in twelve courses ; so much to eat that eating is impossible. Congestion of books—so much to read, that reading is impossible. Congestion in church—stitched and starched up to the eyes (while the servants at home are preparing the roast beef and plum pudding). Congestion at the theatre, at the concert, yawning in dress-clothes on the front seats ; while the real enjoyers and observers are out of sight behind. Such a congestion of unused wealth and property, such a glut, as surely the world before has never seen, and to purge which away will surely require such medicine as the world before has never seen—no gilded pill or silent perambulator this time, but a drastic bolus ploughing its way through the very frame of "society," not without groans and horrible noises.

And through this maze of congested life—of interests which have ceased to be interesting, of enjoyments which have become bores—to pick the way, what an art it has become ! Visitors call in the afternoon, and visits have to be made. The long day has to be

eked out—now a cup of tea, now a five-course meal, now a little coffee, and now a turn at the piano. (And all the time what poor girls are pining, what mothers are dying for want of a little help, a little sympathy!) And ever the smallest crumbs of incident to be worked up into "conversation." Some get quite clever at this. They always say the right thing at the right time, are sympathetic, bright, entertaining. Yes—while Nero is fiddling, Rome is burning. Have you no other use for that sensitive heart, that ready tongue, which nature has given you, than to perpetuate this Fool's Paradise of polite trifling.

A Paradise truly. The hot water arrives so punctually at the bedroom door, the carpets are so soft and warm, the spoons so bright and clean—surely there can't be much amiss in the world. If only these demagogues would keep quiet, these few crack-brained Ruskins—and the faint wail-howling there far down in the conscience.

Do you not attend church on Sunday, and are you not very philanthropic? Do you not tell each other sad stories about the poor over your ice-pudding, till your lips are pursed with pity? (or is it the pudding?) Do you not undertake excursions to the East End, and get deeply interested in the general question of slums? Is it not all very nice, and just as it ought to be, and wouldn't the poor soon get their wrongs redressed if instead of naughtily rioting they were to wait for you to come in your fur cloaks like good fairies, and turn their wretched dens into pleasant palaces?

## THE SIMPLIFICATION OF LIFE

(From "England's Ideal")

No doubt immense simplifications of our daily life are possible ; but this does not seem to be a matter which has been much studied. Rather hitherto the tendency has been all the other way, and every additional ornament on the mantel-piece has been regarded as an acquisition, and not as a nuisance ; though one doesn't see any reason, in the nature of things, why it should be regarded as one more than the other. It cannot be too often remembered that every additional object in a house requires additional dusting, cleaning, repairing, and lucky are you if its requirements stop there. When you abandon a wholesome tile or stone floor for a Turkey carpet, you are setting out on a voyage of which you cannot see the end. The Turkey carpet makes the old furniture look uncomfortable, and calls for stuffed couches and armchairs, the couches and armchairs demand a walnutwood table ; the walnutwood table requires polishing, and the polish bottles require shelves ; the couches and armchairs have castors and springs—which give way and want mending ; they have damask seats which fade and must be covered ; the chintz covers require washing, and when washed they

call for antimacassars to keep them clean. The antimacassars require wool, and the wool requires knitting-needles, and the knitting-needles require a box, the box demands a side-table to stand on, and the side-table involves more covers and castors—and so we go on. Meanwhile the carpet wears out and has to be supplemented by bits of drugget, or eked out with oilcloth, and, beside the daily toil required to keep this mass of rubbish in order, we have every week or month, instead of the pleasant cleaning-day of old times, a terrible domestic convulsion and *bouleversement* of the household.

It is said by those who have travelled in Arabia that the reason why there are so many religious enthusiasts in that country, is that in the extreme simplicity of the life and uniformity of the landscape there *heaven*—in the form of the intense blue sky—seems close upon one. One may almost see God. But we moderns guard ourselves effectually against this danger. For beside the smoke pall which covers our towns, we raise in each household such a dust of trivialities that our attention is fairly absorbed, and if this screen subsides for a moment we are sure to have the daily paper held up before our eyes—so that if a chariot of fire were sent to fetch us, ten to one we should not see it.

## THE USE OF THE HANDS

*(From "England's Ideal")*

Shut yourself off from the great stream of human life, from the great sources of physical and moral health; ignore the common labour by which you live, show clearly your contempt for it, your dislike of it, and then ask others to do it for you; turn aside from nature, divorce yourself from the living breathing heart of the nation; and then you will have done what the governing classes of England to-day have done, have given full directions to your own heart and brain how to shrivel and starve and die.

Man is made to work with his hands. This is a fact which cannot be got over. From this central fact he cannot travel far. I don't care whether it is an individual or a class, the life which is far removed from this becomes corrupt, shrivelled, and diseased. You may explain it how you like, but it is so. Administrative work has to be done in a nation as well as productive work; but it must be done by men accustomed to manual labour, who have the healthy decision and primitive authentic judgment which comes of that, else it cannot be done well. In the new form of society which is slowly advancing upon us, this will be felt more than now. The higher the

position of trust a man occupies the more will it be thought important that, at some period of his life, he should have been thoroughly inured to manual work ; this not only on account of the physical and moral robustness implied by it, but equally because it will be seen to be impossible for anyone, without this experience of what is the very flesh and blood of national life, to promote the good health of the nation, or to understand the conditions under which the people live whom he has to serve.



## EDUCATION AND SIMPLICITY

(From "*England's Idea*")

It seems to be an accepted idea nowadays that the better educated anyone is the more he must require. "A ploughman can do on so much a year, but an educated man—O quite impossible!"

Allow me to say that I regard this idea as entirely false. First of all, if it *were* true, what a dismal prospect it would open out to us! The more educated we became the more we should require for our support, the worse bondage we should be in to material things. We should have to work continually harder and harder to keep pace with our wants, or else to trench more and more on the labour of others; at each step the more complicated would the problem of existence become.

But it is entirely untrue. Education does not turn a man into a creature of blind wants, a prey to ever fresh thirsts and desires—it brings him *into relation with the world around him*. It enables a man to derive pleasure and to draw sustenance from a thousand common things, which bring neither joy nor nourishment to his more enclosed and imprisoned brother. The one can beguile an hour anywhere. In the field, in the street, in the workshop, he sees a

thousand things of interest. The other is bored, he must have a toy—a glass of beer or a box at the opera—but these things cost money.

Besides, the educated man, if truly educated, has surely more resources of skilful labour to fall back upon—he need not fear about the future. The other may do well to accumulate a little fund against a rainy day.

It is only to education commonly so-called—the false education—that these libels apply. I admit that to the current education of the well-to-do they do apply, but that it is only or mainly a cheap-jack education, an education in glib phrases, grammar, and the art of keeping up appearances, and has little to do with bringing anyone into relation with the real world around him—the real world of humanity, of honest daily life, of the majesty of Nature, and the wonderful questions and answers of the soul, which out of these are whispered on everyone who fairly faces them.

## GENTILITY AND ENGLAND'S IDEALS

*(From "England's Ideal")*

But the disease from which the nation is suffering is dishonesty ; the more you look into it the clearer you will perceive that this is so. Let us confess it. What we have all been trying to do is to live at the expense of other people's labour, without giving an equivalent of our own labour in return. Some succeed, others only try ; but it comes to much the same thing.

Let a man pause just for once in this horrid scramble of modern life, and ask himself what he really consumes day by day of other people's labour—what in the way of food, of clothing, of washing, scrubbing, and the attentions of domestics, or even of his own wife and children—what money he spends in drink, dress, books, pictures, at the theatre, in travel. Let him sternly, and as well as he may, reckon up the sum total by which he has thus made himself indebted to his fellows, and then let him consider what he creates for their benefit in return. Let him strike the balance. Is he a benefactor of society ?—is it quits between him and his countrymen and women ?—or is he a dependent upon them, a vacuum and a minus quantity ?—a beggar, alms-receiver, or thief ?

And not only What is he ? but What is he trying to be ? For on the Ideal hangs the whole question. Here at last we come back to the root of national life. What the ideal cherished by the people at large is, that the nation will soon become. Each individual man is not always sure to realise the state of life that he has in his mind, but in the nation it is soon realised ; and if the current idea of individuals is to *get* as much and *give* as little as they can, to be debtors of society and alms-receivers of the labour of others, then you have the spectacle of a nation, as England to-day, rushing on to bankruptcy and ruin, saddled with a huge national debt, and converted into one gigantic workhouse and idle shareholder's asylum.

For there is no question that this is the Ideal of England to-day—to live dependent on others, consuming much and creating next to nothing—to occupy a spacious house, have servants ministering to you, dividends converging from various parts of the world towards you, workmen handing you the best part of their labour as profits, tenants obsequiously bowing as they disgorge their rent, and a good balance at the bank ; to be a kind of human sink into which much flows but out of which nothing ever comes—except an occasional putrid whiff of Charity and Patronage—this, is it not the thing which we have before us ? which if we have not been fortunate enough to attain to, we are doing our best to reach.

Sad that the words “ lady ” and “ gentleman ”—once nought but honourable—should now have become so soiled by all ignoble use. But I fear that nothing can save them. The modern ideal of Gentility is hopelessly corrupt, and it must be our avowed object to destroy it.

If for every man who consumes more than he creates there must of necessity be another man who has to consume less than he creates, what must be the state of affairs in that nation where a vast class — and ever vaster becoming — is living in the height of unproductive wastefulness? Obviously another vast class — and ever vaster becoming — must be sinking down into the abyss of toil, penury, and degradation.

But the whole Gentility business is corrupt throughout and will not bear looking into for a moment. It is incompatible with Christianity (at least as Christ appears to have taught it); it gives a constant lie to the doctrine of human brotherhood.

The wretched man who has got into its toils must surrender that most precious of all things—the human relation to the mass of mankind. He feels a sentimental sympathy certainly for his “poorer brethren”; but he finds that he lives in a house into which it would be simply an insult to ask one of them; he wears clothes in which it is impossible for him to do any work of ordinary usefulness. If he sees an old woman borne down by her burden in the street, he can run to the charity organisation perhaps and get an officer to enquire into her case—but he cannot go straight up to her like a *man*, and take it from her on to his own shoulders; for he is a *gentleman*, and might soil his clothes! It is doubtful even whether—clothes or no clothes, old woman or no old woman—he could face the streets where he is known with a bundle on his shoulders; his dress is a barrier to all human relation with simple people, and his words of sympathy with the poor and suffering are wasted on

the wide air while the flash of his jewellery is in their eyes.

He finds himself among people whose constipated manners and frozen speech are a continual denial of all natural affection—and a continual warning against offence; where to say 'onesty is passable, but to say 'ouse causes a positive congestion; where human dignity is at such a low ebb that to have an obvious patch upon your coat would be considered fatal to it; where manners have reached (I think) the very lowest pitch of littleness and *niaiserie*; where human wants and the sacred facts, sexual and other, on which human life is founded, are systematically ignored; where to converse with a domestic at a dinner table would be an unpardonable breach of etiquette; where it is assumed as a matter of course that you do nothing for yourself—to lighten the burden which your presence in the world necessarily casts upon others; where to be discovered washing your own linen, or cooking your own dinner, or up to the elbows in dough on baking day, or helping to get the coals in, or scrubbing your own floor, or cleaning out your own privy, would pass a sentence of lifelong banishment on you; where all dirty work, or at least such work as is considered dirty by the "educated" people in a household, is thrust upon young and ignorant girls; where children are brought up to feel far more shame at any little breach of social decorum—at an "h" dropped, or a knife used in the wrong place at dinner, or a wrong appellation given to a visitor—than at glaring acts of selfishness and uncharitableness.

In short, the unfortunate man finds himself in a net of falsehoods; the whole system of life around him is founded on falsehood. The pure beautiful relation of humanity, the most sacred thing in all

this world, is betrayed at every step ; and Christianity with its message of human love, Democracy with its magnificent conception of inward and sacramental human equality, can only be cherished by him in the hidden interior of his being ; they can have no real abiding place in his outward life.

## THE RETURN TO NATURE

(From "*Civilization—its Cause and Cure*")

And now, by way of a glimpse into the future—after this long digression what is the route that man will take ?

This is a subject that I hardly dare tackle. "The morning wind ever blows," says Thoreau, "the poem of creation is uninterrupted—but few are the ears that hear it." And how can we, gulled as we are in this present whirlpool, conceive rightly the glory which awaits us ? No limits that our present knowledge puts need alarm us ; the impossibilities will yield very easily when the time comes ; and the anatomical difficulty as to how and where the wings are to grow will vanish when they are felt sprouting !

It can hardly be doubted that the tendency will be—indeed is already showing itself—towards a return to nature and community of human life. This is the way back to the lost Eden, or rather forward to the new Eden, of which the old was only a figure. Man has to undo the wrappings and the mummy lom of centuries, by which he has shut himself from the light of the sun and lain in seeming death, preparing silently his glorious resurrection—for all the world like the funny old chrysalis that he is. He has to emerge



from houses and all his other hiding places wherein so long ago ashamed (as at the voice of God in the garden) he concealed himself—and Nature must once more become his home, as it is the home of the animals and the angels.

And when the civilisation-period has passed away, the old Nature-religion—perhaps greatly grown—will come back. This immense stream of religious life which beginning far beyond the horizon of earliest history has been deflected into various metaphysical and other channels—of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the like—during the historical period, will once more gather itself together to float on its bosom all the arks and sacred vessels of human progress. Man will once more *feel* his unity with his fellows, he will feel his unity with the animals, with the mountains and the streams, with the earth itself and the slow lapse of the constellations, not as an abstract dogma of Science or Theology, but as a living and ever-present fact. Ages back this has been understood better than now. Our Christian ceremonial is saturated with sexual and astronomical symbols ; and long before Christianity existed, the sexual and astronomical were the main forms of religion. That is to say, men instinctively felt and worshipped the great life coming to them through Sex, the great life coming to them from the deeps of Heaven. They deified both. They placed their gods—their own human forms—in sex, they placed them in the sky. And not only so, but wherever they felt this kindred human life—in the animals, in the ibis, the bull, the lamb, the snake, the crocodile ; in the trees and flowers, the oak, the ash, the laurel, the hyacinth ; in the streams

and waterfalls, on the mountainsides or in the depths of the sea—they placed them. The whole universe was full of a life which, tho' not always friendly was *human* and kindred to their own, *felt* by them not reasoned about, but simply perceived. To the early man the notion of his having a separate individuality could only with difficulty occur; hence he troubled himself not with the suicidal questionings concerning the whence and whither which now vex the modern mind. For what causes these questions to be asked is simply the wretched feeling of isolation, actual or prospective, which man necessarily has when he contemplates himself as a separate atom in this immense universe—the gulf which lies below seemingly ready to swallow him, and the anxiety to find some mode of escape. But when he feels once more that he, that *he* himself, is absolutely indivisibly and indestructibly a part of this great whole—why then there is no gulf into which he can possibly fall; when he is sensible of the fact, why then the *how* of its realisation, tho' losing none of its interest, becomes a matter for whose solution he can wait and work in faith and contentment of mind.

## THE TRUE LANDOWNERS

[From "*England's Ideal*"]

The question is which is the true owner? Is it the man who, spending thought and affection and labour on the land, blesses it with increase, and causes its face to smile with glad produce; or is it the man who, hardly knowing even the boundaries of that which he possesses, and feeling no warming of the heart towards it to make it beautiful and blessed, thinks only of what advantage he can gain from it, and of how much rent the law will allow him to scrape from its surface?

And what exactly is this legal ownership? In the case of land, it is the power to evict, to prosecute for poaching, to levy rent, etc. It is essentially a negative power. It is the power to *prevent others from using*. The gentleman I mentioned would very likely have the power to turn all the inhabitants of that village off his land and convert it into a deer forest. He might prevent anyone from tilling any part of his soil. The landlords of England might starve the English people out. The people must pay rent in order to be *allowed* to produce their own food. And so with all property, the legal ownership is essentially negative; it is the power to prevent other

people from using. Note well that it is not the power to use the thing yourself. A man may have a fine telescope but be quite incapable of using it ; yet he has the legal power to prevent anyone else looking through it. So a man may possess a fine tract of land, and yet be ignorant of agriculture and incapable even of handling a spade ; he may not even have the money to set others to work on it ; the *law* supplies him with no force or means wherewith to cultivate that land, it merely supplies him if he wishes, with a (police) force to prevent others from using it. And if there are any useful natural products upon or beneath the surface, it enables him to keep them *all to himself*.

This only illustrates what Ruskin has said, for those who would learn from him, that "wealth is the possession of the valuable by the valiant." Property does not become true *wealth* till it comes into the hands of one who is able and willing to use it well. In the hands of another man it may just as likely be *illth*. Vast tracts of land in the hands of an owner who gives no care or thought to its use, who perhaps does not use it at all in any effective sense, but lives in Paris or London—lands undrained perhaps and breeding malaria, or left in the hands of agents whose sole business is to rack-rent the tenants, and so to induce widespread agricultural paralysis—such lands, or rather (since the lands themselves are *right enough*) the false ownership in them, is *illth*. Buy costly and elaborate dinners, so that you may never know the clean and natural desire for food ; buy a carriage, so that you may never have to walk ; buy heavy-piled furniture and hangings for your room, so that you may not breathe the fragrant air of heaven, and you

will breed disease and death—your wealth will have become illth. And not only for yourself, but—if you follow it out—probably also for those who have to prepare you these things. Use the same money to set twenty honest people to some wholesome and useful work ; use it for them freely and friendly and it will buy bread and life—it will feed their hearts and their bellies both. And not them only but others whom you cannot see. In the one case your possession will be a nuisance, in the other it will be a blessing. The first course is the easy one—of mere legality ; the second is the difficult one—of humanity.

## THE PLACE OF LAW AND AUTHORITY

(From "*England's Ideal*")

At all times, and from whatever points of view, it should be borne in mind that laws are made by the people, not the people by the laws. Modern European Society is cumbered by such a huge and complicated overgrowth of law, that the notion actually gets abroad that such machinery is necessary to keep the people in order—that without it the mass of the people would not live an orderly life; whereas all observation of the habits of primitive and savage tribes, destitute of laws, and almost destitute of any authoritative institutions—and all observation of the habits of civilised people when freed from law (as in gold-mining and other backwood communities)—show just the reverse. The instinct of man is to an orderly life, the law is but the result and expression of this. As well attribute the organisation of a crab to the influence of its shell, as attribute the orderly life of a nation to the action of its laws. Law has a purpose and an influence—but the idea that it is to preserve order is elusive. All its machinery of police and prisons do not, cannot do this. At best in this

sense it only preserves an order advantageous to a certain class ; it is the weapon of a slow and deliberate warfare. It springs from hatred and rouses opposition, and so has a healthy influence.

Fichte said : " The object of all government is to render government superfluous." And certainly if external authority of any kind has a final purpose it must be to establish and consolidate an internal Authority. Whitman adds to his description of " the great city," that it stands " Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority." When this process is complete, government in the ordinary sense is already " rendered superfluous." Anyhow this external governmental power is obviously self-destructive. It has no permanence or finality about it, but in every period of history appears as a husk or shell preparing the force within which is to reject it.

Thus— in this matter of society's change and progress— (though I feel that the subject as a whole is far too deep for me)—I do think that the birth of new moral conceptions in the individual is at least a very important factor. It may be in one individual or in a hundred thousand. As a rule probably when one man feels any such impulse strongly, the hundred thousand are nearer to him than he suspects. (When one leaf, or petal, or stamen begins to form on a tree, or one plant begins to push its way above the ground in spring, there are hundreds of thousands all round just ready to form.) Anyhow, whether he is alone or not, the new moral birth is sacred—as sacred as the child within the mother's womb—it is a kind of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to conceal it. And

when I use the word "moral" here—or anywhere above—I do not, I hope, mean that dull pinch-lipped conventionality of negations which often goes under that name. The deep-lying ineradicable desires, fountains of human action, the lifelong aspirations, the lightning-like revelations of right and justice, the treasured hidden ideals, born in flame and in darkness, in joy and sorrow, in tears and in triumph, within the heart—are as a rule anything but conventional. They may be, and often are, thought *immoral*. I don't care, they are sacred just the same. If they underlie a man's life, and are nearest to himself—they will underlie humanity. To your own self be true . . . ."

Anyhow courage is better than conventionality: take your stand and let the world come round to you. Do not think you are right and everybody else wrong. If you think you are wrong then you may be right; but if you think you are right then you are certainly wrong. Your deepest highest moral conceptions are only for a time. They have to give place. They are the envelopes of freedom—that eternal Freedom which cannot be represented—that peace which passes understanding. Somewhere here is the invisible vital principle, the seed within the seed. It may be held but not thought, felt but not represented—except by life and history. Every individual so far as he touches this stands at the source of social progress—behind the screen on which the phantasmagoria play.



## FREEDOM AND SELF-EXPRESSION

(From "*Angel's Wings*")

*Life is expression.* If you think of it, you will see more and more that it is a movement from within outwards—an unfolding, a development. To obtain a place, a free field, a harmonious expansion, for your activities, your tastes, your feelings, your personality, your Self, in fact, is to Live. To be blocked on all sides, pinned down, maimed, and thrust out of existence, is to Die.

The thing to remember is that primarily Life must be an expression of one's Self. In proportion as it approaches that is it worthy to be called Life. To fall from that is to miss one's aim. To pass through one's mortal days, like a fugitive through the camp of the enemy, in continual fear of discovery, in continual concealment of one's own thoughts and feelings, or like a slave under continual compulsion from others, is not to live : it is only to exist.

Yet how many of us pass through like this ! On all sides we are walled in by Fashion, Convention, Custom : things are done in an habitual meaningless way which expresses nothing except common tradition, or the remains of it—certainly in a way which does not express *our* feelings. We drift along in idle

conformity, simply following the common rut—afraid to show our hands. Or we are enslaved to the bread-and-butter-question and only claim to be ourselves for an hour or two out of the twenty-four. It is not real Life ; it is not anything. It is the existence of a sheep, unworthy of the children of that Prometheus who stole fire from heaven, or even of our mother Eve who ate—simply because she desired it—of the fruit of the tree that stood in the midst of the garden.

I say the scramble for existence has so far dominated society in the past, that the mass of men have worked, not to *create*, not to create round themselves a world answering to the world within ; but simply in a negative way, to avoid penury, to avoid starvation, to satisfy one or two beggarly needs, to please their *masters*. But such work expresses nothing—nothing but what is beggarly. The time is coming when man will rise into command of materials. He will not work from Fear but from Love—not from slavish compulsion but from a real live interest in the creation of his hands. Then, at last, and after all these centuries, his Work, his very Life, will become an Art—it will be an expression of himself ; it will be a word of welcome to someone else. Everything that a man creates, be it only the simplest object for the use of himself or his neighbour, the installation of his house or garden, or the speciality which he supplies to the community, will be touched by the spirit of beauty. It will be the free product of his own nature, of his own activity—the expression of that harmony within which alone makes true work possible. It will have the same beauty that every leaf, every flower of the field, every bird's nest in the

angle of a bough has—the beauty of joy and of freedom in the great comradeship of Nature. While men labour as they do to-day — without hope, without interest, without love, without expression, in sordidness and weariness and squalor of mind and of body, the ban of Ugliness inevitably rests on everything that is produced. In this December sea of ugliness that surrounds and engulfs all modern life, the Fine Arts, so-called, like so many cranky, summer-rigged yachts, toss aimlessly about, with no certain destination or purpose, but in a heroic endeavour at least to keep afloat! The art of Expression, which is the very art of Life's Navigation, has been lost. Our daily lives have lost all directness, all authenticity; we are full of lies and conformity; we do not express ourselves in our social life, when we walk, when we speak, when we work at our trade; how then shall we suddenly learn to do so when we retire into our studios and lock the door?

The key to the expression of one's true self is boldness. William Blake said the true artist should always err in the direction of excess. Boldness and loving Acceptance. For goodness' sake let these so-called evil motives have their expression. They are only evil because they have not yet found their place, their balance. Find then their place for them. You may always express yourself strongly in one direction, provided you do justice also to the opposing expression. You may get as angry as you like on occasion if habitually you are self-controlled. You may even be allowed to indulge the sympathetic vein at times if you will be frankly egoistic at others. In fact only in this way can expression be worked out. Violent

words from an habitually violent man mean nothing ; the sympathy of a weakly altruistic person is without shape. High lights demand deep shadows. The flesh demands the spirit, the spirit the flesh. Space can only be expressed by the bounding line ; the line is nothing but the edge of a space. Extirpation, rejection, denial are useless. Bold statement of seeming opposites and the slow patient loving disclosure of the harmony underlying : this in the long run is the only method. It is here, in the soul's joyful intuition of the unity and consent of all things that our perception of Beauty arises.

What a wonderful thing it is to meet a man or woman whose manners are instantly open and free—not effusive of course, but opening up a direct road (as far as the occasion needs) between him or her and yourself ! How grateful you feel for being delivered for once from the shin-breaking barriers and thorny entanglements of ordinary intercourse !

To-day Manners are meagre and poor because everyone hastens to conceal himself — no one expresses forthright his own feelings, his own nature and needs. It is an elaborate system of lying, of skulking, of dodging behind conventions. How often do you give a bit of your real self to your neighbours ? and what are those mouldy scraps—picked up on the common road and stored in your wallet—which you have the face to offer them instead ? And they, poor things, are hungering for a touch of Nature too — but you deny it them !

## FREEMEN OR SLAVES

*(From "Forecasts of the Coming Century")*

Though it seems a hard thing to say, the outer life of society to-day is animated first and foremost by Fear. From the wretched wage-slave who rises before the break of day, hurries through squalid streets to the dismal sound of the "hammer," engages for nine, ten, or twelve hours, and for a pittance wage, in monotonous work which affords him no interest, no pleasure; who returns home to find his children gone to bed, has his supper and, worn out and weary soon retires himself, only to rise again in the morning and pursue the same deadly round; and who leads a life thus monotonous, inhuman, and devoid of all dignity and reality, simply because he is hounded to it by the dread of starvation;—to the big commercial man who, knowing that his wealth has come to him through speculation and the turns and twists of the market, fears that it may at any moment take to itself wings by the same means; who feels that the more wealth he has, the more ways there are in which he may lose it, the more cares and anxieties belonging to it; and who to continually make his position secure is, or thinks himself, forced to stoop to all sorts of mean and dirty tricks;—over

the great mass of the people the same demon spreads its dusky wings. Feverish anxiety is the keynote of their lives. There is no room for natural gladness or buoyancy of spirits. You may walk the streets of our great cities, but you will hear no one singing—except for coppers; hardly a ploughboy to-day whistles in the furrow; and in almost every factory (this is a fact) if a workman sang at his work he would be "sacked." We are like shipwrecked folk clambering up a cliff. The waves are raging below. Each one clings by handhold or foothold where he may, and in the panic if he push his neighbour from a point of vantage, it is to be regretted certainly, but it cannot be helped!

But such a state of affairs is not normal. Allowing that competition in some degree must always exist, history still, except at rare crises, presents us with no such spectacle of widespread anxiety; the study of native races—whom *we* might consider in a state of destitution—reveals no such dominion of dread. I want the reader to imagine for a moment this burden of fear lifted off the hearts of a whole people; and the result.

Let us imagine for a moment that some good fairy—some transcendental Chancellor of the Exchequer—with a stroke of his wand, has assured to us all not only an old age pension, but a decent provision for all our days of the actual necessities of life (to go no farther than that); so that for the future no man could feel any serious or grinding anxiety for his own material safety or that of his family. What would be the result on our actions?

Perhaps, as many would maintain, nine-tenths of the population would say, "I'm blessed if I'll ever do another stroke of work." Like the organ-grinder

who came into a little fortune, and who forthwith picked up an axe and fell upon his organ, shouting as he hacked it to pieces, " You shall neffer play dat tam *Alabama Coon* any more "—we should feel so sick of our present jobs that we should want to turn our backs on them for ever. Very likely, I should say—and rightly enough too; for "work" in the present day is done under such degrading and miserable conditions by the vast majority of the population that the very best and most manly thing we could do would be to refuse to continue doing it.

But let us suppose, since a bare living has been assured to us and we are in no danger of actual starvation, that we all take a good long holiday—and abstain religiously from doing anything. Suppose that we simply twirl our thumbs in idleness for two, three, four, or six months. Still, is it not obvious that at the end of that time nine-tenths of the population would find sheer idleness appallingly dreary, and that they would *set themselves* to work at some thing or other?—to produce objects of use or beauty, either for themselves, or for their families and neighbours, or even conceivably for society at large: that in fact a spontaneous and free production of goods would spring up, followed of course by a spontaneous and free exchange—a self-supporting society based not on individual dread and anxiety, but on the common fulness of life and energy?

And if anyone still doubts let him consider the thousands in our large towns to-day who would give their ears to be able to get out and work on the land—not so much from any prospect of making a fortune that way, as from mere love of the life; or who in

their spare time cultivate gardens or plots or allotments as a hobby; or the thousands who when the regular day's work is over start some fresh little occupation of their own—some cabinet-making, wood turning, ornamental ironwork or whatnot; the scores of thousands in fact that there are of *natural* gardeners, cabinet-makers, ironworkers, and so forth; and then think how if they were free these folk would sort themselves spontaneously to the work they delighted in.

Thus it appears to be at least *conceivable* that a people not hounded on by compulsion nor kept in subjection by sheer authority would set itself spontaneously to produce the things which it prized. It does not of course at once follow that the result would be perfect order and harmony. But there are a few considerations in the positive direction which I may introduce here.

In the first place each person would be guided in the selection of his occupation by his own taste and skill, or at any rate would be guided by these to a greater extent than he is to-day; and on the whole would be *more* likely to find the work for which he was fitted than he is now. The increase in effective output and vitality from this cause alone would be great. While the immense *variety* of taste and skill in human beings would lead to a corresponding variety of spontaneous products.

In the second place the work done would be Useful. It is certain that no man would freely set himself to dig a hole, only to fill it up again—though it is equally certain that a vast amount of the work done to-day is no more useful than that. If a man were a cabinet-maker and made a chest of drawers, either for himself or a neighbour, he would make it so that the drawers



would open and shut ; but nine-tenths of the chests made on commercial principles are such that the drawers will neither open nor shut. They are not *meant* to be useful, they are meant to have the semblance of being useful ; but they are really made to *sell*. To sell, and by selling yield a profit. And for that purpose they are better adapted if, appearing useful, they turn out really useless, for then the buyer must come again and so yield another profit to the manufacturer and the merchant. The waste, to the community to-day arising from causes of this kind is enormous ; but it is of no moment as long as there is profit to a certain class.

Work in a free society would be done because it was useful. It is curious, when you come to think of it, that there is no other conceivable reason why work should be done. And of course I here include what is beautiful under the term useful—as there is no reason why one should separate what satisfies one human need, like the art-need, from another human need, like the hunger-need. I say the idea of work implies that it is undertaken because the product itself satisfies some human need. But strangely enough in Commerce that is not so. The work is undertaken in order that the product may *sell*, and so yield a profit ; that is all.

In the third place it follows—as William Morris points out—that “work” in the new sense would be a pleasure—one of the greatest pleasures undoubtedly of life ; and this one fact would transform its whole character. We cannot say that now. How many are there who take real pleasure and satisfaction in their daily labour ? Are they, in each township, to

be counted on the fingers ? But what is the good of life if its chief element, and that which must always be its chief element, is odious ? No, the only true economy is to arrange so that your daily labour shall be itself a joy. Then, and then only, are you on the safe side of life. And, your work being such, its product is sure to become beautiful ; that painful distinction between the beautiful and the useful dies out, and everything made is an artistic product. Art becomes conterminous with life.

Thus it will be observed that whereas the present society is founded on a system of Private Property, in which, almost necessarily, the covetous hard type of man becomes the large proprietor, and (supported by law and government) is enabled to prey upon the small one ; and whereas the result of this arrangement is a bitter and continuous struggle for possession, in which the motive to activity is mainly Fear ; we, on the contrary, are disentangling a conception of a society in which Private Property is supported by no apparatus of armed authority, but as far as it exists is a perfectly spontaneous arrangement, and in which the main motives to activity are neither Fear nor greed of Gain, but rather Community of life and Interest in life—in which in fact you undertake work because you *like* the work, because you feel that you can do it, and because you know that the product will be useful, either to yourself or someone else !

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE

*(From "Love's Coming of Age")*

Marcus Aurelius quotes a saying of Heraclitus to the effect that the death of earth is to become water (liquefaction), and the death of water is to become air (evaporation), and the death of air is to become fire (combustion). So in the human body are there sensual, emotional, spiritual, and other elements of which it may be said that their death on one plane means their transformation and new birth on other planes.

It will readily be seen that I am not arguing that the lower or more physical manifestations of love should be killed out in order to force the growth of the more spiritual and enduring forms—because Nature in her slow evolutions does not generally countenance such high and mighty methods; but am merely trying to indicate that there are grounds for believing in the transmutability of the various forms of the passion, and grounds for thinking that the sacrifice of a lower phase may sometimes be the only condition on which a higher and more durable phase can be attained; and that therefore Restraint (which is absolutely necessary at times) *has* its compensation.

Any one who has once realised how glorious a thing Love is in its essence, and how indestructible, will hardly need to call anything that leads to it a sacrifice; and he is indeed a master of life who, accepting the grosser desires as they come to his body, and not refusing them, knows how to transform them at will into the most rare and fragrant flowers of human emotion.

Until these subjects are openly put before children and young people with some degree of intelligent and sympathetic handling, it can scarcely be expected that anything but the utmost confusion, in mind and in morals, should reign in matters of Sex. That we should leave our children to pick up their information about the most sacred, the most profound and vital, of all human functions, from the mere gutter, and learn to know it first from the lips of ignorance and vice, seems almost incredible, and certainly indicates the deeply-rooted unbelief and uncleanness of our own thoughts. Yet a child at the age of puberty, with the unfolding of its far-down emotional and sexual nature, is eminently capable of the most sensitive, affectional, and serene appreciation of what Sex means (generally more so, as things are to-day, than its worldling parent or guardian); and can absorb the teaching, if sympathetically given, without any shock or disturbance to its sense of shame — that sense which is so natural and valuable a safeguard of early youth. To teach the child first, quite openly, its physical relation to its own mother, its long indwelling in her body, and the deep and sacred bond of tenderness between mother and child in consequence; then, after a time, to explain the relation of fatherhood, and how the love of the parents for each other was the cause of its own (the child's) existence:

these things are easy and natural—at least they are so to the young mind—and excite in it no surprise, or sense of unfitness, but only gratitude and a kind of tender wonderment.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE

Pleasure should come as the natural (and indeed inevitable) accompaniment of life, believed in with a kind of free faith, but never sought as the object of life. It is in the inversion of this order that the uncleanness of the senses arises. Sex to-day throughout the domains of civilisation is thoroughly unclean. Everywhere it is slimed over with the thought of pleasure. Not for joy, not for mere delight in and excess of life, not for pride in the generation of children, not for a symbol and expression of deepest soul-union, does it exist—but for our own gratification. Hence we disown it in our thoughts, and cover it up with false shame and unbelief—knowing well that to seek a social act for a private end is a falsehood.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE

A half-grown man is of course a tyrant. And so it has come about that the rule of Man in the world has for many ages meant the serfdom of Woman.

It was perhaps not altogether unnatural that Man's craze for property and individual ownership should have culminated in the enslavement of woman—his most precious and beloved object. But the consequence of this absurdity was a whole series of other absurdities. What between insincere flattery and rose-water adorations on the one hand, and serfdom and neglect on the other, woman was, as Havelock Ellis says, treated as "a cross between an angel and an idiot." And after a time, adapting herself to the treatment, she really became something between an angel and an idiot — a bundle of weak and flabby sentiments, combined with a wholly undeveloped brain. Moreover by being continually specialised and specialised in the sexual and domestic direction, she lost touch with the actual world, and grew, one may say, into a separate species from man—so that in the later civilisations the males and females, except when the sex-attraction has compelled them as it were to come together, have been wont to congregate in separate herds, and talk languages each unintelligible to the other.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE

The 'lady,' the household drudge, and the prostitute, are the three main types of woman resulting in our modern civilisation from the process of the past—and it is hard to know which is the most wretched, which is the most wronged, and which is the most unlike that which in her own heart every true woman would desire to be.

In some sense the 'lady' of the period, which is just beginning to pass away is the most characteristic product of Commercialism. The sense of Private Property, arising and joining with the "angel and idiot" theory, turned Woman more and more—especially of course among the possessing classes—into an emblem of possession—a mere doll, an empty idol, a brag of the man's exclusive right in the sex—till at last, as her vain splendours increased and her real usefulness diminished, she ultimated into the 'perfect lady.' But let every woman who piques and preens herself to the fulfilment of this ideal in her own person, remember what is the cost and what is the meaning of her quest: the covert enslavement to, and the covert contempt of Man.

The instinct of helpful personal service is so strong in women, and such a deep-rooted part of their natures, that to be treated as a mere target for other people's worship and service—especially when this is



tainted with insincerity—must be most obnoxious to them. To think that women still exist by hundreds and hundreds of thousands, women with hearts and hands formed for love and helpfulness, who are brought up as 'ladies' and have to spend their lives listening to the idiotic platitudes of the Middle-class Man, and "waited upon" by wage-bought domestics, is enough to make one shudder. The modern 'gentleman' is bad enough, but the 'lady' of bourgeoisdom, literally "crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper," prostituted to a life which in her heart she hates—with its petty ideals, its narrow horizon, and its empty honours—is indeed a pitiful spectacle.

## SEX RELATIONS IN A FREE SOCIETY

*(From "Love's Coming of Age")*

One of the great difficulties in the way of arriving at any general understanding on questions of sex is the extraordinary diversity of feeling and temperament which exists in these matters. Needless to say, this is increased by the reserve, natural or artificial, which so seldom allows people to express their sentiments quite freely. In the great ocean there are so many currents, cold and warm, fresh, and salt, and brackish; and each one thinks that the current in which he lives is the whole ocean. The man of the world hardly understands, certainly does not sympathise with, the recluse or ascetic—and the want of appreciation is generally returned; the maternal, the sexual, and the philanthropic woman, are all somewhat unintelligible to each other; the average male and the average female approach the great passion from totally different sides, and are continually at odds over it; and again both of these great sections of humanity fail entirely to understand that other and well-marked class of persons whose love-attraction is (inborn) towards their own sex, and indeed hardly recognise the existence of such a class, although as a matter of fact it is a large

and important one in every community. In fact, all these differences have hitherto been so little the subject of impartial study that we are still amazingly in the dark about them.

When we look back to History, and the various customs of the world in different races and tribes, and at different periods of time, we seem to see these natural divergencies of human temperament reflected in the extraordinary diversity of practices that have obtained and been recognised. We see that, in some cases, the worship of sex took its place beside the worship of the gods; and — what appears equally strange — that the orgiastic rites and saturnalia of the early world were intimately connected with religious feeling; we find that, in other cases, asceticism and chastity and every denial of the flesh were glorified and looked upon as providing the only way to the heavenly kingdom; we discover that marriage has been instituted and defined and sanctioned in endless forms, each looked upon as the only moral and possible form in its own time and country; and that the position of woman under these different conditions has varied in the most remarkable way — that in some of the primitive societies where group-mariages of one kind or another prevailed their dignity and influence were of the highest, that under some forms of Monogamy, as among the Nagas of Bengal, women have been abjectly degraded, while under other forms, as in Ancient Egypt and the later Roman Empire, they have been treated with respect; and so forth. We cannot fail, I say, to recognise the enormous diversity of practice which has existed over the world in this matter of the relations of the sexes; nor, I may add, can we venture — if we possess any sense of humanity — to put our finger down finally on

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any one custom or institution, and say, Here alone is the right way.

On the contrary, it seems to me probable that, broadly speaking, a really free Society will accept and make use of all that has gone before. If, as we have suggested, historical forms and customs are the indication of tendencies and instincts which still exist among us, then the question is, not the extinction of these tendencies, but the finding of the right place and really rational expression for them.

## THE FAILURES OF MARRIAGE

(From "*Love's Coming of Age*")

There is one point which ought to be considered as contributing to the ill-success of many marriages. I mean the harshness of the line, the kind of 'ring-fence,' which social opinion (at any rate in this country) draws round the married pair with respect to their relations to outsiders. On the one hand, and within the fence, society allows practically the utmost passional excess or indulgence, and condones it; on the other hand (I am speaking of the middling bulk of the people, not of the extreme aristocratic and slum classes) beyond that limit, the slightest familiarity, or any expression of affection which might by any possibility be interpreted as deriving from sexual feeling, is sternly anathematised. Marriage, by a kind of absurd fiction, is represented as an oasis situated in the midst of an arid desert — in which latter, it is pretended, neither of the two parties is so fortunate as to find any objects of real affectional interest. If they do they have carefully to conceal the same from the other party.

The result of this convention is obvious enough. The married pair, thus *driven* as well as drawn into closest continual contact with each other, are put

through an ordeal which might well cause the stoutest affection to quail. To have to spend all your life with another person is severe ; but to have all outside personal interests, except of the most abstract kind, debarred, and if there happens to be any natural jealousy in the case, to have it tenfold increased by public interference, is terrible ; and yet unless the contracting parties are fortunate enough to be, both of them, of such a temperament that they are capable of strong attachments to persons of their own sex—and this does not always exclude jealousy—such must be their fate.

It is hardly necessary to say, not only how dull a place this makes the home, but also how narrowing it acts on the lives of the married pair. However appropriate the union may be in itself it cannot be good that it should degenerate—as it tends to degenerate so often, and where man and wife are most faithful to each other—into a mere *égoïsme à deux*. And right enough no doubt as a great number of such unions actually are, it must be confessed that the bourgeois marriage as a rule, and just in its most successful and pious and respectable form, carries with it an odious sense of Stiffness and narrowness, moral and intellectual ; and that the type of Family which it provides is too often like that which is disclosed when on turning over a large stone we disturb an insect Home that seldom sees the light.

But in cases where the marriage does not happen to be particularly successful or unsuccessful, when perhaps a true but not overpoweringly intense affection is satiated at a needlessly early stage by the continual and unrelieved impingement of the two personalities on each other, then the boredom resulting is something frightful to contemplate—and all

the more so because of the genuine affection behind it, which contemplates with horror its own suicide. The weary couples that may be seen at seaside places and pleasure resorts — the respectable working-man with his wife trailing along by his side, or the highly respectable stock-jobber arm-in-arm with his better and larger half--their blank faces, utter want of any common topic of conversation which has not been exhausted a thousand times already, and their obvious relief when the hour comes which will take them back to their several and divided occupations—these illustrate sufficiently what I mean. The curious thing is that jealousy (accentuated as it is by social opinion) sometimes increases in exact proportion to mutual boredom ; and there are thousands of cases of married couples leading a cat-and-dog life, and knowing that they weary each other to distraction, who for that very reason dread all the more to lose sight of each other, and thus never get a chance of that holiday from their own society, and renewal of outside interests, which would make a real good time for them possible.

Thus the sharpness of the line which society draws around the pair, and the kind of fatal snap-of-the-lock with which marriage suddenly cuts them off from the world, not only precluding the two, as might fairly be thought advisable, from sexual, but also barring any openly affectional relations with outsiders, and corroborating the selfish sense of monopoly which each has in the other,—these things lead inevitably to the narrowing down of lives and the blunting of general human interests, to intense mutual ennui, and when (as an escape from these evils) outside relations are covertly indulged in, to prolonged and systematic deceit.

From all which the only conclusion seems to be that marriage must be either alive or dead. As a dead thing it can of course be petrified into a hard and fast formula, but if it is to be a living bond, that living bond must be trusted to, to hold the lovers together; not be too forcibly stiffened and contracted by private jealousy and public censorship, lest the thing that it would preserve for us perish so, and cease altogether to be beautiful. It is the same with this as with everything else. If we would have a living thing, we must give that thing some degree of liberty - even though liberty bring with it risk. If we would debit all liberty and all risk, then we can have only the mummy and dead husk of the thing.

Practically I do not doubt that the more people think about these matters, and the more experience they have, the more they must ever come to feel that there is such a thing as a permanent and life-long union—perhaps a many life-long union - founded on some deep elements of attachment and congruity in character; and the more they must come to prize the constancy and loyalty which rivets such unions, in comparison with the fickle passion which tends to dissipate them.

It might not be so very difficult to get quite young people to understand this—to understand that even though they may have to contend with some superfluity of passion in early years, yet that the most deeply-rooted desire within them will probably be the end point to a permanent union with one mate, and that towards this end they must be prepared to use self-control against the aimless straying of their



passions, and patience and tenderness towards the realisation of the union when its time comes. Probably most youths and girls, at the age of romance, would easily appreciate this position; and it would bring to them a much more effective and natural idea of the sacredness of Marriage than they ever get from the artificial thunder of the Church and the State on the subject.

## HEALTH AND DISEASE

(From "*Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure*")

When we come to analyse the conception of Disease, physical or mental, in society or in the individual, it evidently means, as already hinted once or twice, *loss of unity*. Health, therefore, should mean unity, and it is curious that the history of the word entirely corroborates this idea. As is well known, the words health, whole, holy, are from the same stock; and they indicate to us the fact that far back in the past those who created this group of words had a conception of the meaning of Health very different from ours, and which they embodied unconsciously in the word itself and its strange relatives.

These are, for instance, and among others: heal, hallow, hale, holy, whole, wholesome; German heilig, Heiland (the Saviour); Latin salus (as in salutation, salvation); Greek kalos; also compare hail! a salutation, and, less certainly connected, the root *hal*, to breathe, as in inhale, exhale — French haleine — Italian and French alma and âme (the soul); compare the Latin spiritus, spirit or breath, and Sanskrit Atman, breath or soul, German athmen.

Wholeness, holiness . . . "if thine eye be single,

thy whole body shall be full of light." . . . "thy faith hath made thee *whole*."

The idea seems to be a positive one—a condition of the body in which it is an entirety, a unity—a central force maintaining that condition; and disease being the break-up—or break-down—of that entirety into multiplicity.

The peculiarity about our modern conception of Health is that it seems to be a purely negative one. So impressed are we by the myriad presence of Disease—so numerous its dangers, so sudden and unforetellable its attacks—that we have come to look upon health as the mere absence of the same. As a solitary spy picks his way through a hostile camp at night, sees the enemy sitting round his fires, and trembles at the crackling of a twig beneath his feet—so the traveller thro' this world, comforter in one hand and physic-bottle in the other, must pick his way, fearful lest at any time he disturb the sleeping legions of death—thrice blessed if by any means, steering now to the right and now to the left, and thinking only of his personal safety, he pass by without discovery to the other side.

Health with us is a negative thing. It is a neutralisation of opposing dangers. It is to be neither rheumatic nor gouty, consumptive nor bilious, to be untroubled by head-ache, back-ache, heart-ache or any of the "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." These are the realities. Health is the mere negation of them.

## THE ARTIFICIAL NATURE OF MODERN SCIENCE

*(From "The Need of a Rational and Human Science")*

It is curious (and yet I think it will presently be seen that it is quite what might have been expected) that during this last century or so, in which Machinery has played such an important part in our daily and social life, mechanical ideas have come to colour all our conceptions of Science and the Universe. Modern Science holds it as a kind of ideal (even though finding it at times difficult to realise) to reduce everything to mechanical action, and to show each process of Nature intelligible in the same sense as a Machine is intelligible. Yet this conception, this ideal, involves a complete fallacy. For the moment you come to think of it, you see that *no* part of Nature really even resembles a machine.

What is a machine in the ordinary sense? It is an aggregation of parts put together to fulfil certain definite actions and no others. A sewing-machine fulfils the purpose of sewing, a watch fulfils that of keeping time, and they fulfil those purposes only. All their parts subserve those actions, and in that sense may be completely described — as far as just their

mechanical action is concerned — the same by a thousand mechanics. But I make bold to say that *no* object in Nature fulfils just one action, or series of actions, and no others.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, every object fulfils an endless series of actions.

Nature is an infinitude, and can at no point be circumscribed by the human intellect. Nor obviously is there any sense in taking one little portion of Nature and isolating it from the rest, and then describing it exhaustively *as if* it really were so isolated. A thousand mechanics will agree, as I have said, in their description of a machine — because in fact they will agree to view the machine just in the one aspect of its particular action ; but ask a thousand people to describe one and the same face—or better still, get a thousand portrait-painters, skilled in their art, to paint portraits of the same face—and you know perfectly well that all the likenesses will be different. And why will they be different ? Simply because every face, however rude, has infinite sides, infinite aspects, and each painter selects what he paints from his own point of view. And the same is true of every object and process in Nature.

Then if these things are true (you ask again) how is it that scientific men *do* arrive at definite conclusions, and do agree with each other so far as they do ?

It is, and obviously must be, by the method of isolation ; by the method of selecting certain aspects of the problems presented to them, and ignoring others. For since *all* the relations of any phenomenon of Nature cannot possibly be compassed, the only way *must* be to ignore some and concentrate attention on others ; and when there is a kind of tacit agreement

as to which aspects shall be passed over and which considered, there is naturally an agreement in the results. Thus by this method, waiving all other aspects of the problem, the Eye may be described and defined as an optical instrument, the Heart as a common Pump, and the Solar System as a neat illustration of certain mechanical laws discovered by Galileo and Newton.

I do not believe in a science of mere Formulas, which can be poured from one brain to another like water in a pot. I believe in something more organic to Humanity—which shall combine Sense, Intellect and Soul; which shall include the keenest training of the Senses, the exactest use of the Brain, and the subordination of both of these to the finest and most generous attitude of Man towards Nature.

To come to quite practical aspects, I think that Physical Science, and for that matter Natural History too, ought to be founded on the closest observation and actual intimacy with Nature. It is notorious that in many respects the perceptions, the Nature-intuitions, of savage races far outdo those of civilised man. We have let that side go slack, and too often the man of science when he comes out of his study is a mere baby in the external world.

Man has to find and to *feel* his true relation to other creatures and to the whole of which he is a part, and has to use his brain to further this. Science is, as we all know, the search for Unity. That is its ideal. It unites innumerable phenomena under one law and then it unites many laws under one higher; always seeking for the ultimate complete integration. But (is it not obvious?) Man cannot find that unity

*of the Whole until he feels his unity with the Whole. To found a Science of one-ness on the murderous Warfare and insane Competition of men with each other, and on the Slaughter and Vivisection of animals—the search for unity on the practice of disunity is an absurdity, which can only in the long run reveal itself as such.*

I do not know whether it seems obvious to you, but it does to me, that Man will never find in theory the unity of outer Nature till he reaches in practice the unity of his own. When he has learnt to harmonise in himself all his powers, bodily and mental, his desires, faculties, needs, and bring them into perfect co-operation — when he has found the true hierarchy of himself — then somehow I think that Nature round him will reflect this order and range itself in clear and intelligible harmony about him.

## VIVISECTION AND KNOWLEDGE

I think there are indications that we have reached a kind of crisis in this matter of Vivisection. Everything has its day ; and this craze for digging into the bowels and brains of animals has come to a climax where it must surely before long prove its own futility and insanity. I use the words deliberately ; for when mankind has reached that pass where the fear and terror of outer bodily disease drives it to do things revolting and violating to its own inner life and deepest instincts, it is obvious that it has got to an ugly place, where disaster waits it on either hand, and only those go forward whom the gods have blinded.

It is as well at the outset that we should take stock as far as we can of the forces arrayed against us, and realise the extent to which Vivisection prevails, and the nature of it. We see Institutes of Preventive Medicine and Pathological Laboratories springing up in all directions ; we find catalogues of vivisectional apparatus, like that of Lautenschlager, circulating in various countries ; we know there is a large trade in living animals ; but these things are vague and while it is obvious that the spread of Vivisection is very great, it is of course difficult to gauge its exact



extent. The Parliamentary Return, however, for 1902, on "Experiments on Living Animals," comes to our aid by informing us that 57 places were used last year for such experiments; that over 200 persons actually performed experiments in them; and that the total number of experiments thus registered was 14,906, or close upon 15,000.

Of these 14,906, 12,776 were "not serious," without anæsthetics, and 2,130 are denominated as "serious," with anæsthetics. But again out of these last, in 945 cases certificates were granted dispensing with anæsthetics, after the performance of the "initial operation." Thus by the Report's own showing, out of the 15,000 experiments, there were just under 1000 serious ones with anæsthetics only at the commencement; there were somewhat over 1000 serious, in which anæsthetics were understood to have been used throughout; and again there were nearly 13,000 without anæsthetics, but not understood to be serious.

In trying to estimate what amount of animal suffering these figures represent, I do not wish either to harrow your feelings needlessly, or to do an injustice to those who think themselves called on to inflict that suffering. Of the 13,000 less serious experiments, the most part undoubtedly are those inoculations and hypodermic injections for which there is such a rage just now. They do not as a rule mean what we should call great agony. You have, however, to remember that each experiment is more often really a series of experiments lasting for days, weeks, or even months, in which the animal is kept in durance vile till it dies or is killed, and in which it may be subjected to the most horrible and loathsome diseases with which humanity is acquainted. Though we

may not call that serious, it is probable that the animal itself would take a very different view of the matter; and anyhow it is impossible to deny that in these experiments, practically without anæsthetics, a vast mass of suffering must be involved. On the other hand, those which the Report calls "serious" are such as it is sickening merely to read about—the opening out of the whole internal cavity of an animal's body, the pushing of tubes down veins and arteries, the dissecting out of important nerves, even of the spinal cord itself, and the stimulating of their cut ends with electricity—these things are hideous to think of.

Some of these experiments may be conducted under anæsthesia; some obviously cannot be. We may have to test the effect of Pain itself on the organ, or of Fear; the responses generally to stimulation will be interfered with by anæsthetics, and it will be advisable to keep these down as much as possible, even in those cases where they are used. And we have seen that in 945 "serious" cases in 1902 they were, except for the initial proceedings, formally dispensed with.

Can we doubt the conclusion, namely, that an enormous amount of what we must call "atrocious pain" is inflicted every year? I would gladly escape that conclusion; but I do not see any way of doing so, and there remains nothing but to face the fact.

I do not contest the *possibility* of advances in knowledge being made in this way. I content myself by saying that knowledge which is gained by cruelty is to humanity more loss than profit.

But let us not do the Professor or the student an injustice. He is carried on by a popular current—a fashion and craze of the day—and he has hardly time to consider or to realise what kind of quest it is that he is engaged in.

He does not realise that fear and cruelty (fear of disease and callousness to animal suffering) which alone inspire and make possible the procedure of Vivisection — are themselves diseases — morbid conditions of mind which inevitably penetrate down into the body, and produce more diseases in society than Vivisection has ever attained to cure.

Let us not rail against knowledge, or be understood in any way to rail against knowledge. Progress in knowledge is man's splendid prerogative, one of his deepest instincts and greatest pleasures. Yet here too as in everything else reason and good sense are concerned. To sacrifice—in the thirst for some fresh detail of information — whole hecatombs of living creatures, to carry on experiments so self-stultifying as I have described, is to indulge in a mere lust of knowledge (or I should say curiosity); and is exactly equivalent to indulging in any other lust that you can think of. To pursue knowledge in this way is to cover ourselves with darkness. It is to blind ourselves to that greatest and most health-giving of all knowledge — the sense of our common life and unity with all creatures. It is to sacrifice the greater to the less; it is to suffer loss rather than to effect a gain.

## A DEFENCE OF CRIMINALS

(From "*Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure*")

A criminal is literally a person accused -accused, and in the modern sense of the word convicted, of being harmful to Society. But is he there in the dock, the patch-coated brawler or burglar, really harmful to Society ? is he more harmful than the mild old gentleman in the wig who pronounces sentence upon him ? That is the question. Certainly he has infringed the Law - and the law is in a sense the consolidated public opinion of Society - but if no one were to break the law, public opinion would ossify, and society would die. As a matter of fact Society keeps changing its opinion. How then are we to know when it is right and when it is wrong ? The Outcast of one age is the Hero of another. In execration they nailed Roger Bacon's manuscripts out in the sun and rain, to rot crucified upon planks -- his bones lie in an unknown and unhonoured grave -- yet to-day he is regarded as a pioneer of human thought. The hated Christian holding his ill famed love-feasts in the darkness of the catacombs has climbed on to the throne of S. Peter and the world. The Jew money-lender whom Front-de-Bœuf could torture with impunity is become a Rothschild --

guest of princes and instigator of commercial wars ; and Shylock is now a highly respectable Railway Bondholder. And the Accepted of one age is the Criminal of the next. All the glories of Alexander do not condone in our eyes for his cruelty in crucifying the brave defenders of Tyre by thousands along the sea-shore ; and if Solomon with his thousand wives and concubines were to appear in London to-morrow, even our most frivolous circles would be shocked, and Brigham Young by contrast seem a domestic model. The judge pronounces sentence on the prisoner now, but Society in its turn and in the lapse of years pronounces sentence on the judge. It holds in its hand a new canon, a new code of morals, and consigns its former representative and the law which he administered to a limbo of contempt.

When the ideal of Society is material gain or possession, as it is largely to-day, the object of its special condemnation is the thief--not the rich thief, for he is already in possession and therefore respectable, but the poor thief. There is nothing to show that the poor thief is really more immoral or unsocial than the respectable money-grubber ; but it is very clear that the money-grubber has been floating with the great current of Society while the poor man has been swimming against it, and so has been worsted. Or when, as to-day, Society rests on private property in land, its counter-ideal is the poacher. If you go in the company of the county squire-archy and listen to the after-dinner talk you will soon think the poacher a combination of all human and diabolic vices ; yet I have known a good many poachers, and

either have been very lucky in my specimens or singularly prejudiced in their favour, for I have generally found them very good fellows—but with just this one blemish that they invariably regard a landlord as an emissary of the evil one ! The poacher is as much in the right, probably, as the landlord, but he is not right for the time. He is asserting a right (and an instinct) belonging to a past time—when for hunting purposes all land was held in common—or to a time in the future when such or similar rights shall be restored. Cæsar says of the Suevi that they tilled the ground in common, and had no private lands, and there is abundant evidence that all early human communities before they entered on the stage of modern civilisation were communistic in character. Some of the Pacific Islanders to-day are in the same condition. In those times private property was theft. Obviously the man who attempted to retain for himself land or goods, or who fenced off a portion of the common ground and—like the modern landlord—would allow no one to till it who did not pay him a tax—was a criminal of the deepest dye. Nevertheless the criminals pushed their way to the front, and have become the respectables of modern Society. And it is quite probable that in like manner the criminals of to-day will push to the front and become the respectables of a later age.

As to the marriage relation and its attendant moralities, the forms are numerous and notorious enough. Public opinion seems to have varied through all phases and ideals, and yet there is no indication of finality. Late investigations show that at an early

period in all human societies the marriage tie is very promiscuous—the relation of brother and sister in this respect being rather the rule than the exception ; in the present day such a bond as the last-mentioned would be considered inhuman and monstrous. Polyandry prevails among one people or at one time, polygyny prevails among another people or at another time. In Central Africa to-day the chief offers you his wife as a mark of hospitality, in India the native Prince keeps her hidden even from his most intimate guest. Among the Japanese, public opinion holds young women—even of good birth—singularly free in their intercourse with men, *till they are married* ; at Paris they are free after. In the Greek and Roman antiquity marriage seems with some brilliant exceptions to have been a prosaic affair—mostly a matter of convenience and housekeeping — the woman an underling—little of the ideal attaching to the relationship of man and wife. The romance of love went elsewhere. The better class of free women or Hetairai were those who gave a spiritual charm to the passion. They were an educated and recognised body, and possibly in their best times exercised a healthy and discriminating influence upon the male youth. The respectful treatment of Theodota by Socrates, and the advice which he gives her concerning her lovers : to keep the insolent from her door, and to rejoice greatly when the accepted succeed in anything honourable, indicates this. That their influence was at times immense the mere name of Aspasia is sufficient to show ; and if Plato in the Symposium reports correctly the words of Diotima, her teaching on the subject of human and divine love was probably of the noblest and profoundest that has ever been given to the world.

The respectability of to-day is the respectability of property. There is nothing so respectable as being well-off. The Law confirms this: everything is on the side of the rich; justice is too expensive a thing for the poor man. Offences against the person hardly count for so much as those against property. You may beat your wife within an inch of her life and only get three months; but if you steal a rabbit, you may be "sent" for years. So again gambling by thousands on Change is respectable enough, but pitch and toss for halfpence in the streets is low, and must be dealt with by the police; while it is a mere commonplace to say that the high-class swindler is "received" in society from which a more honest but patch-coated brother would infallibly be rejected. As Walt Whitman has it "There is plenty of glamour about the most damnable crimes and hoggish meannesses, special and general, of the feudal and dynastic world over there, with its personnel of lords and queens and courts, so well-dressed and handsome. But the people are ungrammatical, untidy, and their sins gaunt and ill-bred."



## COMMERCIALISM, CASTE AND COMMUNISM

*(From "From Adam's Peak to Elephanta")*

There is certainly a most remarkable movement taking place in India to-day, towards modern commercialism and Western education and ideas, and away from the old caste and communal system of the past — a movement which while it is in some ways the reverse of our Western Socialist movement answers curiously to it in the rapidity and intensity of its development and in the enthusiasm which it inspires. The movement is, of course, at present confined to the towns, and even in these to sections and coteries—the 90 per cent. agricultural population being as yet practically unaffected by it—but here again it is the old story of the bulk of the population being stirred and set in motion by the energetic few, or at anyrate following at some distance on their lead; and we may yet expect to see this take place in the present case.

Knowing as we do at home the evils which attend our commercial and competitive order of society it is difficult to understand the interest which it arouses in India, until we realise the decay and degradation

into which caste and the ancient communism have fallen. On these latter institutions commercialism is destined to act as a solvent, and though it is not likely that it will obliterate them—considering how deeply they are rooted in the genius of the Indian people, and considering how utterly dissimilar that genius is to the genius of the West—still it may fairly be hoped that it will clean away a great deal of rubbish that has accumulated round them, and free them to be of some use again in the future, when the present movement will probably have had its fling and passed away. On all sides in India one meets with little points and details which remind one of the Feudal system in our own lands; and as this passed in its due time into the commercial system so will it be in India — only there is a good deal to indicate that the disease, or whatever it is, will not be taken so severely in India as in the West, and will run its course and pass over in a shorter time.

The complexity into which the caste system has grown since the days when society was divided into four castes only — Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras—is something most extraordinary. Race, occupation, and geographical position have all had their influence in the growth of this phenomenon. When one hears that the Brahmins alone are divided into 1886 separate classes or tribes, one begins to realise what a complicated affair it is. "The Brahmins," says Hunter, in his *Indian Empire*, "so far from being a compact unit are made up of several hundred castes who cannot intermarry nor eat food cooked by each other." Of course, locality has a good deal to do with this subdivision; and it is said that a Brahmin of the North-West is the most select, and can prepare food for all classes of Brahmins (it being

a rule of all high caste that one must not touch food cooked by an inferior caste); but family and genealogical descent also no doubt have a good deal to do with it; and as to employment, even among the Brahmins, though manual labour is a degradation in their eyes, plentiful individuals may be found who follow such trades as shepherds, fishermen, porters, potters, etc. Dr Wilson of Bombay wrote two large volumes of his projected great work on Caste, and then died; but had not finished his first subject, the Brahmins!

In the present day the Brahmins are, I believe, pretty equally distributed all over India, forming their own castes among the other races and castes, but, of course, not intermarrying with them, doing as a rule little or no manual work, but clustering in thousands round temples and holy places, full of greed and ever on the look-out for money. Though ignorant mostly, still they have good opportunities in their colleges for learning, and some are very learned. They alone can perform the temple services and priestly acts generally; and oftentimes they do not disguise their contempt for the inferior castes, withdrawing their skirts pharisaically as they pass, or compelling an old and infirm person to descend into the muddy road while they occupy the narrow vantage of the footway.

This pharisaism of caste marks not only the Brahmins, but other sections; a thousand vexatious rules and regulations hedge in the life of every "twice-born" man; and the first glance at the streets of an Indian town makes one conscious of something antagonistic to *humanity*, in the broad sense by which it affords a common ground to the meeting of any two individuals. There are difficulties in the way of mere

human converse. Not only do people not eat together (except they belong to the same section) ; but they don't *touch* each other very freely ; don't shake hands, obviously ; even the terms of greeting are scanty. A sort of chill strikes one : a *noli me tangere* sentiment, which drives one (as usual) to find some of the most grateful company among the outcast. Yet the people are disposed to be friendly, and in fact are sensitive and clinging by nature ; but this is the form of society into which they have grown.

The defence of the system from the native religious point of view is that Caste defines a man's position and duties at once, limits him to a certain area of life, with its temptations and possibilities and responsibilities (caste for instance puts a check on travelling ; to go to sea is to break all bounds), and saves him therefore from unbridled licence and the insane scramble of the West ; restricts his outward world and so develops the inward ; narrows his life and so causes it to reach higher — as trees thickly planted spire upward to the sky. Caste, it is said, holds society in a definite form, without which vague turmoil would for ever ensue, distracting men to worldly cares and projects and rendering them incapable of the highest life. When, however, this last, the truly highest, is developed within an individual, then—for him—the sanction of caste ceases, and he acknowledges it no more. As to the criticism—so obvious from the Western point of view—of the unfairness that a man should be confined all his life to that class or stratum in which he is born, to the Indian religioner this is nothing ; since he believes that each man is born in those surroundings of life which belong to his stage of progress, and must get the experience which belongs to that stage before moving farther.

However this may be, the rigidity of caste as it yet exists gives a strange shock to one's democratic notions. "Once a *dhobi* always a *dhobi*," says the proverb. The washerman (*dhobi*) is one of the poorest and most despised of men; the word is in fact a common term of reproach; but once a washerman, a washerman (save in the rarest cases) you will remain. And once a pariah always a pariah—a thing that no caste man will touch. Yet—and here comes in the extraordinary transcendental democracy (if one may call it so) of the Hindu religion—Brahm himself, the unnameable God, is sometimes called the *dhobi*, and some of the greatest religious teachers, including Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kurral*, have been drawn from the ranks of the Pariahs.

The English themselves in India hardly realise how strong are the caste feelings and habits among all but the few natives who have fairly broken with the system. At a levee some few years back a Lieut.-Governor, to show his cordial feeling towards a native Rajah, put his hand on the prince's shoulder, while speaking to him; but the latter, as soon as he could decently disengage himself, hurried home and took a bath, to purify himself from the touch! Nor to this day can the mass of the people of India get over the disgust and disapprobation they felt towards the English when they found that they insisted on eating *beef*—a thing that only the very lowest classes will touch; indeed this habit has not only done a good deal to alienate the sympathies of the people, but it is one of the chief reasons why the English find it so hard or next to impossible to get servants of good caste.

An acquaintance of mine in Ceylon who belongs to the Vellála caste told me that on one occasion he paid a visit to a friend of his in India who belonged to the

same caste but a different section of it. They had a Brahmin cook, who prepared the food for both of them, but who being of a higher caste could not eat *after* them ; while *they* could not eat together because they did not belong to the same section. The Brahmin cook therefore ate his dinner first, and then served up the remainder separately to the two friends, who sat at different tables with a curtain hanging between them !

I myself knew of a case in which an elderly native gentleman was quite put to it, and had to engage an extra servant, because, though he had a man already who could cook and draw water for him to drink, this man was not of the right caste to fill his bath ! Can one wonder, when caste regulations have fallen into such pettiness, that the more advanced spirits hail with acclaim any new movement which promises deliverance from the bondage ?

Another curious element in the corruption of caste is the growth of the tyranny of respectability. Among certain sections — mainly, I imagine, the merchant and trading castes—some of the members becoming rich form themselves into little coteries which take to themselves the government of the caste, and while not altogether denying their communal fellowship with, do not also altogether conceal their contempt for, the poorer members, and the divergence of their own interests and standards from those of the masses. Of course, with this high-flying respectability goes very often (as with us) a pharisaical observance of religious ordinances, and a good deal of so-called philanthropy.

In fact—despite the efforts of certain parties to minimise it—it seems to me evident that we are face

to face with an important social movement in India. What the upshot of it may be no one probably can tell—it may subside again in time, or it may gather volume and force towards some definite issue ; • but it certainly cannot be ignored. • The Pagetts, M.P., may be ponderously superficial about it, but the Kiplings merry are at least equally far from the truth. Of course in actual numerical strength as compared with the whole population the party may be small ; but then, as in other such movements, since it is just the most active and energetic folk who join them, their import cannot be measured by mere numbers. It is useless again to say that because the movement is not acknowledged by the peasants, or by the religious folk, or because it is regarded with a jealous eye by certain sections, that therefore it is of no account ; because similar things are always said and always have been said of every new social effort—in its inception—however popular or influential it may afterwards become.

The question which is most interesting at this juncture to anyone who recognises that there really is something like a change of attitude taking place in the Indian peoples, is : How do the Anglo-Indians regard this change ? and my answer is this—though given with diffidence—since it is a large generalisation and there may be, certainly are, many exceptions to it—is : I believe that taken as a whole the Anglos look upon it with a mingled sentiment of Fear and Dislike. I think they look upon the movement with a certain amount of Fear—perhaps not unnaturally. The remembrance of the Mutiny of '57 is before them ; they feel themselves to be a mere handful among millions. And I am sure they look upon it with Dislike, for as said above there is no real touch, no

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real sympathy, between them and the native races. However it may be for the liberalising Englishman at home to indulge in a sentimental sympathy with the aspiring native, the Britisher in India feels that the relation is only tolerable as long as there is a fixed and impassable distinction between the ruler and the ruled. Take that away, let the two races come into actual contact on an equality, and . . . but the thought is not to be endured.

And this feeling of race-dishlike is, I think—as I have hinted in an earlier chapter—enhanced by the fact that the Britisher in India is a "class" man in his social feeling. I have several times had occasion to think that the bulk-people of the two countries—though by no means agreeing with each other—would, if intercourse were at all possible, get on better together than the actual parties do at present. The evils of a commercial class-government which we are beginning to realise so acutely at home—the want of touch between the rulers and the ruled, the testing of all politics by the touchstone of commercial profits and dividends, the consequent enrichment of the few at the expense of the many, the growth of slum and factory life, and the impoverishment of the peasant and the farmer, are curiously paralleled by what is taking place in India; and in many respects it is becoming necessary to realise that some of our difficulties in India are not merely such as belong to the country itself, but are part and parcel of the same problem which is beginning to vex us at home—the social problem, namely. The same narrowness of social creed, the entire decadence of the old standards of gentle birth without their replacement by any new ideal, worthy to be so called, the same trumpery earmarks of society-connection, etc., distinguish the



ruling classes in one country as in the other ; and in both are the signals of coming change.

At the same time it would be absurd to assume that the native of India is free from serious defects which make the problem, to the Anglo-Indian, ever so much more difficult of solution. And of these probably the tendency to evasion, deceit, and underhand dealing is the most serious. The Hindu, specially with his subtle mind and passive character is thus unreliable ; it is difficult to find a man who will stick with absolute fidelity to his word, or of whom you can be certain that his ostensible object is his real one ; and naturally this sort of thing creates estrangement.

To my mind this social gulf existing between the rulers and the ruled is the most pregnant fact of our presence in India—the one that calls most for attention, and that looms biggest with consequences for the future. Misunderstandings of all kinds flow from it. "When this want of intercourse," says Beck, in his *Essays on Indian Topics* "between the communities or a reasonable number of people of each, is fixed on my attention, I often feel with a sinking of the heart that the end of the British Indian Empire is not far distant."

One of the most far-reaching and penetrating ways in which this Western movement is influencing India is in its action on the sense of *property*. The conception of property, as I have already pointed out once or twice, is gradually veering from the communistic to the highly individualistic. In all departments, whether in the family or the township or the caste, the idea of joint possession or joint regula-

tion of goods or land for common purposes is dying out in favour of separate and distinct holding for purely individual ends. It is well known what an immense revolution in the structure of society has taken place, in the history of various races and peoples, when this change of conception has set in. Nor is it likely that India will prove altogether an exception to the rule. For the change is going on not only—as might fairly be expected—in the great cities, where Western influence is directly felt, but even in the agricultural regions, where, ever since the British occupation, it has been slowly spreading, partly through the indirect action of British laws and land settlements, and partly through the gradual infiltration, in a variety of ways, of commercial and competitive modes of thought.

Now no estimate of Indian affairs and movements can be said to be of value, which does not take account of the weight—one might say the dead weight—of its agricultural life : the 80 or 90 per cent. of the population who live secluded in small villages, in the most primitive fashion, with their village goddess and their Hindu temple—hardly knowing what government they live under, and are apparently untouched from age to age by invention and what we call progress. Nor can the conservative force so represented be well exaggerated. But if even this agricultural mass is beginning to slide, we have indeed evidence that great forces are at work. If the village communities are going to break up, and the old bonds of rural society to dissolve, we may be destined to witness, as Henry Maine suggests, the recurrence of "that terrible problem of pauperism which began to press on English statesmen as soon as the old English cultivating groups began distinctly to fall to pieces." "In India, how-

ever," he says, " the solution will be far more difficult than it has proved here."

All this assumes the continued spread and growth of the commercial ideal in India — which is a large question, and wide in its bearings. Considering all the forces which tend nowadays in that direction, and the apparent inevitableness of the thing as a phase of modern life at home, its growth in India for some years to come seems hardly doubtful. But it is a curious phenomenon. Anything more antagonistic to the genius of ancient India—the Wisdom-land—than this cheap-and-nasty, puffing profit-mongering, enterprising, energetic individualistic, " business," can hardly be imagined; and the queer broil witnessed to-day in cities like Bombay and Calcutta only illustrates the incongruity. To Hindus of the old school, with their far-back spiritual ideal, a civilisation like ours, whose highest conception of life and religion is the General Post Office, is simply *anathema*. I will quote a portion of a letter received from an Indian friend on the subject, which gives an idea of this point of view. Referring to the poverty of the people—

" All this terrible destitution and suffering throughout one-seventh of the world's population has been brought about without any benefit to the English people themselves. It has only benefited the English capitalists and professional classes. The vaunted administrative capacity of the English is a fiction. They make good policemen and keep order, when the people acquiesce—that is all. If this acquiescence ceases, as it must, when the people rightly or wrongly believe their religion and family life in danger from the government, the English must pack up and go, and woe to the English capitalist and professional

man ! I feel more and more strongly every day that the English with their commercial ideals and standards and institutions have done far more to ruin the country than if it had been overrun periodically by hordes of savage Tatars."

That Commercialism is bringing and will bring great evils in its train, in India as elsewhere—the sapping of the more manly and martial virtues, the accentuation of greed and sophistry, the dominance of the money-lender—I do not doubt ; though I do not quite agree with the above denunciation. I think if the English have infested and plagued poor India, it is greatly the fault of the Indians themselves, who, in their passiveness and lethargy have allowed it to be so. And I think—taking perhaps on my side a too optimistic view—that this growing industrialism and mechanical civilisation may (for a time) do much good, in the way of rousing up the people, giving *definition*, so much needed, to their minds and work, and instilling among them the Western idea of progress, which in some ways fallacious has still its value and use.

Only for a time, however. We in England, now already witnessing the beginning of the end of the commercial *régime*, are becoming accustomed to the idea that it is only a temporary phase ; and in India where, as I have said, the whole genius of the land and its traditions is so adverse to such a system, and the weight of ancient custom so enormous, we can hardly expect that it will take such hold as here, or run through quite so protracted a course of years. Commercialism will no doubt greatly modify and simplify the caste system—but to the caste system in some purified form I am inclined to think the people will return ; it will do something also to free

the women—give them back at least as much freedom as they had in early times and before the Moham-medan conquests, if not more ; and finally Western science will strongly and usefully criticise the prevalent religious systems and practices, and give that definition and *materialism* to the popular thought which is so sadly wanting in the India of to-day ; but the old underlying truths of Indian philosophy and tradition it will not touch. This extraordinary possession—containing the very germ of modern democracy—which has come all down the ages as the special heritage and mission of the Indian peoples, will remain as heretofore indestructible and unchanged, and will still form, we must think, the rallying point of Indian life ; but it is probable and indeed to be hoped that the criticism of Western thought, by clearing away a lot of rubbish, will help to make its outline and true nature clearer to the world.

## COMMERCIALISM, CASTE AND COMMUNISM

Since 1892, a terrible succession of famines in India—probably the worst ever known there, and followed, apparently, by a condition of chronic destitution and agricultural paralysis over an immense area—is giving rise to the most gloomy forebodings in the heart of every lover of that great country. Have agricultural depression, and the loss of the peasant's working stock gone so far there, that recovery, even with good seasons, is dubious? Are the conditions of agricultural life under the British rule—the conditions of land-tenure, taxes, rents, markets, mortgages, etc.—such that a downward drift is in the long run inevitable? Will our Government and people ever make a sincere and deep-reaching effort to rehabilitate the prosperity of the Indian masses, even (as it must be) at some considerable cost to themselves? Such are some of the questions which force themselves upon us.

A cry for Empire, hollow-sounding and sinister, has gone up in Britain during the last few years. Were that cry whole-hearted and genuine, backed by a real belief in our mission to other peoples, and a real effort to fulfil such mission, there would be little to be said

against it. But what do we see ? While the sound and fury are great, the signification is practically nothing. Having added some country to our Imperial demesne, we practically cease to take any interest in it. The people at home, as a body, with the exception of a few privately interested individuals, forget all about it. The official class administers it as a matter of the most otiose routine. Indifference and neglect rule ; and it is these which make the cry of Empire so utterly hollow.

Who, for instance, cares for India ? What body of people at home makes it its business to consider its welfare, or even to plant there the high ideals of British civilisation, of which we hear so much. Why is it that, year after year, and year after year, when the Indian budget comes on, the destinies of these 250 millions of people are dealt with and despatched in the House of Commons before empty benches ? Why is it that even all the sufferings of that immense population during the last few years have failed to arouse any effective interest ? Let us confess it : we do not administer India, we simply let her drift.

The people at home do not, and cannot, attend to other people's business (and that is the sufficient and conclusive retort to all great schemes of domination). They have, or ought to have, their own affairs to attend to.

## THE CRAZE FOR EMPIRE

For long enough now this Nation of Shopkeepers has gone prowling about the world seeking for smaller nations to trade with—inspired to this business not by any advantages really resulting to the general community, but by the commercial interests of the great exchanges of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and other places—which are really the central ganglions of our national life. If the smaller nations or peoples *refused* to trade with us, then, hey presto! what indignation on our part! what big guns and rifles, and swift annexation of the little country! All accompanied by what high moral attitude about the wicked customs of the folk concerned, their murder of certain missionaries, &c., and revolting sanctimonious talk about the blessings of Civilisation and the Bible.

The cry of "Empire" is the crazy cry of imbecile and tottering Authority, not only in England but in all the government-bestridden nations of the West. The case of India—the ruin of India, where if ever nation had splendid opportunities England had—proves the falseness, the craziness, of the cry. But



even if all the views stated above could be controverted, there remains this one incontrovertible and utterly damning fact—namely, that official England has no real care for, takes no real interest in her Empire when she has acquired it—that year after year, and year after year, the destinies of 250 millions of people in India are dealt with and dispatched before empty benches in the House of Commons. Nothing can obliterate the meaning of that fact, or palliate its sinister effect upon the Indians themselves. And yet we go forth onto the housetops and into the highways, and with strident hollow-sounding voices shout the blessings of our rule, and *more* Empire and more Annexation in South Africa, West Africa, Egypt, China, and whatever other parts of the world may yet remain !

The craze surely will pass before long ; the hollow pretence will expose itself. These fatuous Empires, with their parade of power and their absolute lack of any real policy—this British Lion, this Russian Bear, these German, French, and American Eagles—these birds and beasts of prey—with their barbaric notions of Greed and War, their impossible armaments, and their swift financial ruin impending over them—will fall and be rent asunder. The hollow masks of them will perish. *And the sooner the better.* But underneath surely there will be rejoicing, for it will be found that so after all the real peoples of the earth have come one degree nearer together.

## THOUGHTS BUT CLOAKS FOR FEELINGS

(From "*Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure*")

That "the wish is father to the thought" is in its wide sense profoundly true. In the individual, feeling precedes thinking—as the body precedes the clothes. In history, the Rousseau precedes the Voltaire. There is, I believe, a physiological parallel; for behind the brain and determining its action stand the great sympathetic nerve—the organ of the emotions. In fact here the brain appears as distinctly transitional. It stands between the nerves of sense on the one hand and the great sympathetic on the other.

Change the feeling in an individual, and his whole method of thinking will be revolutionised; change the axiom or primary sensation in a science, and the whole structure will have to be re-created. The current Political Economy is founded on the axiom of individual greed; but let a new axiomatic emotion spring up (as of justice or fair play instead of unlimited grab), and the base of the science will be altered, and will necessitate a new construction.

So when people argue (on politics, morality, art,

etc.) it will generally be found that they differ at the *base* ; they go out, perhaps quite unconsciously, from different axioms and hence they *cannot* agree. Occasionally of course a strict examination will show that, while agreeing at the base, one of them has made a false step in deduction ; in that case his thought does *not* represent his primary feeling, and when this is pointed out he is forced to alter it. But more often it is found that the difference lies deep down at a point beyond the reach of reason ; and they disagree to the end. In this case neither is right and neither is wrong. They simply feel differently ; they are different persons.

The Thought then is the expression, the outgrowth, the covering, of underlying Feeling. And in the great life of Man as a whole, as in the lesser life of the individual, his continual new birth and inward growth causes his thought-systems also continually to change and be replaced by new ones. Like the bud-sheaths and husks in a growing plant or tree they give form for a time to the life within ; then they fall off and are replaced. The husk prepares the bud underneath which is to throw it off. The thought prepares and protects the feeling underneath which growing will inevitably reject it ; and when a thought has been formed it is already false, *i.e.*, ready to fall.

" Facts " are, at least, half feelings. Let us acknowledge this and not empty the feeling out of them, but deepen and enlarge that which we already have in them. Who knows whether we have ever *seen* the blue sky ? Who knows whether we have ever seen each other ? Is it not a commonplace to say that one man sees in the common objects of Nature what

another is wholly unconscious of ? " The primrose on the river's brim a yellow primrose is to him—and nothing more." To what extent may the facts of Nature thus be deepened and made more substantial to us—and whither will this process lead us ?

Do we not want to feel *more*, not less, in the presence of phenomena—to enter into a living relation with the blue sky, and the incense-laden air, and the plants and the animals—nay, even with poisonous and hurtful things to have a keener *sense* of their hurtfulness ? Is it not a strange kind of science that which wakes the mind to pursue the shadows of things, but dulls the senses to the reality of them—which causes a man to try to bottle the pure atmosphere of heaven and then to shut himself in a gas-reeking, ill-ventilated laboratory while he analyses it ; or allows him to vivisect a dog, unconscious that he is blaspheming the pure and holy relation between man and the animals in doing so ? Surely the man of Science (in its higher sense, that is) should be lynx-eyed as an Indian, keen-scented as a hound—with all senses and feelings trained by constant use and a pure and healthy life in close contact with Nature, and with a heart beating in sympathy with every creature. Such a man would have at command, so to speak, the key-board of the universe ; but the mechanical, unhealthy, indoor-living student—is he not really *ignorant of the facts* ?—Certainly, since he has not felt them, he is.

## ART AND EMOTION

(From "Angus's Wings")

The Fine Arts have a close analogy to the Industrial Arts, and may be looked on much in the same light. In the first place, as the Industrial Arts have to effect a definite object—and any method is allowable which really effects the object—so the Fine Arts have to effect a definite object, and for them any method (provided it really serves) is allowable. The object of the Industrial Arts is to convey or embody a material or mechanical purpose—as in a bridge, in well-cut type, good clothing, etc. *The object of the Fine Arts is to convey an emotion.* When a cat, on the intrusion of a dog, walks across the floor on the very tips of her claws, hardly touching the ground, fiercely spitting, her back arched, and an ineffable scowl on her face, she is an artist of the finest sort; not a hair on her body but what she uses to express her feelings. But as it is obvious that *any* materials or arrangement of materials which will really effect the purpose of a bridge, or the purpose of type, or the purpose of clothing—or which will best effect those purposes—is "legitimate"; or rather, as there is no question of what is legitimate or not, but it is simply obvious that such arrangement, when

discovered, *will* be used ; so it is clear that any arrangement in a poem or a picture or a piece of music, or in the form and colour of a jug, or in the expression of the human face, which really conveys the feeling intended, *will*, when it is discovered—in spite of any "principles" or criticisms—inevitably be used, simply *because* it conveys the feeling.

But this proviso—that the art-work *must* convey the feeling—does itself cover a large ground of criticism. When you first enter Milan Cathedral, you are immensely impressed with the height and gloom of the interior and the dimly-seen fretwork and tracery of the roof ; but when you learn (as you inevitably do) that there is no fretwork there, but that the roof is painted, you turn away, a sadder and wiser being. The Art is bad, not because there is any high and dry principle against simulated carving, but simply because the work has failed of its effect. A deception might be all right in some cases ; but a deception which is sure to be found out, and whose exposure stultifies the intended impression, is, of course, a mistake.

It will be seen that the conveyance of an emotion, an impression, a feeling, is by no means a mere matter of an artistic method or technique, but that it implies a curious power of diving into the mind of the auditor or spectator, every nook and cranny of it, of foreseeing how such and such combinations will affect such mind ; what associations, what criticisms, what misunderstandings they will call forth ; and a power of shaping the materials accordingly : a singular combination, in fact, of masterfulness and sympathy.

And that is why the *great* artists in literature and the plastic arts, the Rembrandt, the Titian, or the Shakespeare, have generally been men of such wide humanity and knowledge of the world. The human *mind* itself is, in fact, their plastic material, which, knowing so well in all its capabilities, they can mould at will to the emotional forms of which they themselves are masters.

And here let it be noted that Art is not concerned with conveying a *Thought*. That is rather the province of ordinary Language. As far as a Drama, a Picture, or a Poem, merely convey intelligence of new thoughts or ideas they are not Art. To be artistic they must excite *emotion*. People sometimes ask, What is the Meaning of such and such a work? Meaning be hanged! There is certainly no harm in its having a definite meaning or moral interwoven with its structure; in some cases that may be quite necessary; but the real question is, What contagion of *feeling* does it communicate from the breast of the author to that of his audience?

## THE MOTIVE OF ART

(From "Aesthetics' Wings")

The *intention* of a work and its *execution* are two different things. A work cannot properly be called artistic unless its execution fulfils the intention or nearly so. The execution may be good or bad ; and the result may, if you like, be called good Art or bad Art accordingly. But it is obviously much more difficult to attain satisfactory execution in a work of large range and scope—say in a Shakespearian drama—than in a trivial subject like a *vers-de-société* ; and therefore the criticism of an art-work cannot be dismissed by a simple reference to perfection of execution without any consideration of the grandeur and beauty of the *motive*. The motive may even contain in itself an element of ugliness. A picture, for instance, of the human form may be painted merely in order to excite lust. It may be very artfully and even artistically painted ; yet the meanness and sordidness of the intention will inevitably in the long run show itself and detract from the beauty of the picture. It is true that Art has nothing to do with copy-book morality. But from another point of view it may be said that morality (in its large and broad sense) is itself an Art. It is the Art of life, and so the



greatest of Arts. To convey emotions of that class which inspire Life and give it its finest utterance is obviously art-work of the best sort. The Greeks felt this, and practically did not separate ethics from æsthetics. To them a good, a noble, action was simply one which satisfied their artistic sense, their sense of beauty, in the sphere of morals.

There has therefore to be considered, in judging any work of Art, besides perfection of execution, the grandeur, dignity, sincerity, tenderness — in short, the beauty—of the motive. And these two things may be kept separate in thought, as two diverse elements in the total effect, and need not be confused with each other; though of course practically they blend and interlock continually—as we say the soul does with the body.

## REALISM IN ART

(From "Angels' Wings")

Everyone knows that wild flowers brought into a sick room are dearer and more delightful to the patient than the choicest hothouse blossoms. The colonist long absent from home is touched to tears by the sight of the little English daisy. A snowdrop or a wild rose come loaded with lifelong associations and emotions, where the most gorgeous South American orchid may only leave one cold or curious. And so some of the very greatest effects in Literature and Art generally are produced by the most homely, the most common, situations, the very simplest words and phrases and combinations.

It is for these reasons that verisimilitude is generally required in novels, pictures, plays, and so forth: not that there is any absolute command to keep to real life and facts as we know them, but because in deserting this ground we clearly lose so much. Everyone has thrilled to the story of "Oliver Twist"; but a novel whose characters were giants and fairies, or whose scene were laid among the inhabitants of Mars, would never touch us very deeply, simply because it would rouse no familiar emotional associations.

In the childhood of races and nations this fidelity

to facts does not count for so much. Exaggerations and distortions are common; dragons and sea-monsters abound; horses leap over wide rivers; fairies and giants appear; and miracles are plentiful. And this because in childhood the vision of what is consistent and possible is not so clear, and because the emotions which chiefly crave for expression are emotions of fear and awe and wonderment, which are excited by strange and grotesque things. The growing mind of man, in fact, full of fear and wonder before the mystery of Nature, peoples that Nature with the forms that best reflect its own state.

But with maturity, whether of the individual or the race, the realistic side gathers strength; the reliance on actual experience becomes greater, the class of emotion which seeks for expression depends less on distortion and excess, and more on the central and well-balanced; and the artistic method changes accordingly. As the scientific inventor finds there is hardly any mechanical or other device which has not been forestalled by some living creature or organism, so the artist finds there is hardly any emotional combination which is not portrayed and represented in some way or other in actual life and Nature. It remains, then, only for him to select the document, so to say, and to let Nature speak for herself. The way, indeed, some artists have of *standing aside* and letting you look on the scene with them is very remarkable. Says Lao-Tsze: "By non-action there is nothing which may not be done." And so in Art, one may almost think, there is nothing which may not be done by not doing it, *i.e.*, by letting Nature do it for you.

There are two main directions of modern Realism, more or less distinct from each other, one which tends to an over-elaborate reproduction of Nature, forgetful of the fact that no representation has any value *except* for expression; the other which tends to reproduction of those aspects of Nature—the ugly, the obscene, the criminal, and so forth—which are generally ignored or set aside as not available. The first direction is obviously an error. Medical dictionaries, guide-books, encyclopædias—the mere portrayal of actual facts or scenes—do not fall under the head of Art. If the portrayal is effected in such a manner as *not* to bring out the associated emotions, or if it bring out the emotions in such a disjointed way as not to combine with each other to a total effect, the method is mere imitation, and the artistic result *nil*. All elaborate Realism runs this risk—the more elaborate it is the more difficulty in making each detail tell—and the moment a detail ceases to tell, ceases to be organic, the risk of its becoming mere lumber, mere “document.” Then follows one of the greatest troubles in Art, that of dullness, from which, it must be confessed, even the novels of Zola and the longer stories of Tolstoy (notwithstanding the fine work in them) are not free.

The other direction of Realism is vastly more important. In a great mass of the ruder facts of life, hitherto somewhat untouched—in wounds and death, in physiological facts, in sex, in the common life of the mass-people, in poverty, in criminality, in ignorance—lie huge stores of associations capable of rousing the most keen and complex emotions. The portrayal of the root facts of life, like those of sex, necessarily touches the springs of the most impera-

tive and, in a sense, most important feelings. Any artist must see that these associations, these emotions, are there for his use. Yet of course it does not follow that they are easy to use. In fact, just because they are so powerful and so deeply implicated in life it is difficult to disentangle and show them in harmonious relation with the rest of Nature. The ugliness, the dirt, the obscenities, the criminalities, have immense, priceless, artistic value, as soon as—like the discords in music—they can be made to lead to their proper resolutions; as soon as they are burnt up like fuel, and rendered transparent, in the great human emotions which are competent to dissolve them. "*Le laid c'est le beau*," said some of the early critics of Realism. But even that is not quite true! For all depends upon treatment, and only the great masters can handle the toughest facts. Whitman's lines, "*The City Dead-house*," with their deep tenderness for the "poor dead prostitute"—their feeling so ardent that it searches through and renders incandescent as with fire all the unclean details—have, short as they are, a grander total effect, I think, than Zola's novel ending with the death of Nana.

## THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE GODS

(From "*Angels' Wings*")

It has been said "An honest God's the noblest work of Man." And so it is. The gods rise ever as man's Ideal rises—of which they are the expression. And yet there is something more in it all than the mere *growth* of the type: there is the actual variety and abundance of types represented. How rich is humanity in its gods! *All* the types are needed. Here we have a heritage far beyond the scope of any single deity—the Eternal Soul itself. It would seem as if every faculty and feeling, every thought and passion, of Man was preserved in this splendid Museum.

Look at Siva, two-sexed. Tradition says that once man himself was thus formed. How gracious and lovely (dreams the far-back Indian) if this might be again! Or look at Brahma with a hundred arms and legs, whose fingers and fleetness run through all creation. Think of Orpheus—how profound, how touching!—drawing all souls to him, whether from the upper or the under worlds, by the magic of his lute—gathering all Nature round him in the bond of harmony. And there is that Adonis the beautiful youth, whom (slain by the wild boar) the maidens weep each year—him we will take for symbol of the

Sun, wounded by the tusk of winter in his generative part ; for symbol of Good wounded, as it ever is, by Evil.

For there are evil gods, and strange queer gods too ; and Typhon, that Northern Dragon, circling round the Pole, from his lair of darkness and cold continually threatens the gracious Lord of Light and Life ; and there is Beelzebub, the Prince of Flies and of all Spitefulness ; and Kali, terrible (though sometimes gracious) with her necklace of skulls ; and that fruitful monster, than Man - Fish, Oannes ; and Priapus, most improper of deities ; and Pan, whose lusty horns and hoofs glance through all creation—whom the Greeks were not afraid of, but the Christians were, and so made him into their Devil !

## ANGELS' WINGS

Probably, in Art as in Life, there is always a certain conflict going on between the emotional and intellectual elements. The Greek Art tends to the expression of beauty in clear, simple, and definite forms; the Gothic Art tends towards a wealth of emotion, imagery, mysticism, escaping the bounds of definite thought. The most perfect Art need, I think, reject nothing; but the Time and the Place and the Mode of treatment are all-important.

The recurrence of wings in Cupids and Angels, all down the history of Art and in so many nations, suggests a great need in the human mind—suggests the haunting vision of the real existence of beings capable of swift translation through space. If the artist sees any such vision, and feels its actuality, then he is bound to try and express it. He must express it—and in his own way; and so long as he does express it, effectively and permanently, he may do so by any device that he likes—but not by a stout country girl floating about in the air with feathers fastened to her bodice, because that is quite unthinkable.



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